

Friday October 11 1996

Albania D 8.50
Australia L 2.20
Austria S 3.00
Belgium B 1.50
Canada C 3.35
Czechia C 3.35
Denmark D 1.50
France F 1.50
Germany G 4.00
Greece D 4.00
Hong Kong HK\$ 2.20
Ireland I 1.50
Italy I 1.50
Japan J 1.50
Korea S 1.50
Lithuania L 1.50
Malta M 1.50
Netherlands G 4.00
Norway N 1.50
Oman O 1.50
Pakistan P 1.50
Portugal P 1.50
Russia R 1.50
Saudi Arabia S 1.50
Slovakia S 1.50
Slovenia S 1.50
Spain S 1.50
Sweden S 1.50
Switzerland S 1.50
Taiwan T 1.50
Thailand T 1.50
Turkey T 1.50
USA US\$ 2.75

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46.681

Friday Review

With European weather



From Bexhill to Broadway — my world tour by Eddie Izzard

Cover story



Bring back the clowns — a sixties mystery is solved

Music page 10

Cold store fleet to house BSE beef

Liam Buckingham

THE Government is planning to charter a fleet of refrigerated ships and cool-store containers to provide extra storage for the carcasses of cattle slaughtered in the attempt to stamp out BSE.

The move to provide emergency storage comes as farmers step up protests against what they claim is a policy of inaction over mad cow disease. Farmers staged a high profile demonstration this week outside the Conservative Party conference, and the National Farmers Union yesterday passed a motion of no confidence in Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister.

It is estimated that about 22,000 cattle are being slaughtered each week in the over 30-month scheme (OTMS), but farmers want this raised to 55,000 to eliminate the doomed cattle before the hardest winter months set in, when it is estimated that the cost of feeding a cow will rise to £1.50 a day.

A government spokeswoman said conventional cold storage capacity would probably soon be exhausted, and negotiations were taking place which could mean ships, able to cope with up to 20,000 dead animals, would be chartered.

It was not yet clear how many vessels would have to be hired, so the Government could not calculate what the likely cost would be. But the cold-store container ships would be chartered on the open market, which, according to shipping market sources, could cost over \$5,500 a month each.

Ships full of yellow-dyed beef would float in British ports linked to land by mains electricity supply, until there was sufficient capacity in the rendering industry to incinerate the meat.

Maff is also understood to be looking at hiring large containers which could be kept in container ports. Ships and containers are considered to have security advantage over conventional cold stores because they are seen as less vulnerable to protest groups of farmers and animal welfare organisations.

Although the Government, which estimates that reimbursing farmers for slaughtered cattle will cost more than £2.5 billion, would not comment on the availability of suitable ships, the daily shipping newspaper, Lloyd's List, reported that there were plenty of Russian refrigerated vessels available for charter at reasonable rates.



Alan Borg, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, seen at the foot of a cast of David, by Michelangelo, yesterday when announcing that retail sales of museum products reached £30 million last year

Gold handcuffs deal stuns City

Patrick Donovan City Editor

ONE of the most lavish so-called "golden handcuffs" packages in the history of City banking will give 120 NatWest investment bankers the chance to earn an average of £2 million each, it emerged last night.

The glittering incentive offer, aimed at buying the staff's loyalty for at least three years, is at the heart of yesterday's announcement that NatWest is to take over specialist financier J.O. Hambro Magan. The deal is estimated at around £150 million.

NatWest pays its ordinary high street clerical staff between £10,000 and £15,000. It has made redundant 20,000 staff in the last five years.

The bank has been forced to lock in key executives with promises of enormous pay packets because of competition from rivals.

Such is the shortage of top bankers to handle the current surge in international take-over and acquisition activity, competition has driven salaries for the most senior directors to well over £10 million a year.

The bank has recently signed up the former foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, as a "roving ambassador" on £250,000 for the equivalent of a two-day working week.

The chief executive of NatWest Markets, Martin Owen, yesterday declined to spell out any financial details about the take-over, admitting the terms were "very sensitive".

But he conceded that there were "golden handcuffs" for senior staff, designed to ensure that high fliers remain in place after takeover of the eight-year-old banking "boutique" which has handled everything from the sale of Flourens to the £2.9 billion merger of Lord Hollick's MAI with the Express newspaper group, United.

Unions expressed dismay at the payment of huge sums to select employees when tens of thousands of NatWest staff faced redundancy.

Rory Murphy of the NatWest Staff Association said: "Staff could go berserk. It's a question of morality. You can't have one rule for the investment bank and one for the ordinary retail bank."

Bank prizes

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell: Maurice Thompson and Michael Cohrs, £7 million each over two years

Tokai Bank: Trader Kaveh Alamouti: Salary of £2.35 million, down from nearly £15 million last year

Mercury Asset Management: Highest paid woman in the City: Fund manager Carol Galley, £210,000 salary, plus £300,000 bonus plus £400,000 deferred bonus

Salomon Brothers: Two media analysts recently signed up at £200,000 apiece

Top of the shop: George Soros, \$1.5 billion last year

between 10,000 and 15,000 staff throughout its branch network over the next three years. The majority of these staff earn between £10,000 and £15,000.

These "golden handcuff" terms, have been given to the top 40 staff at J.O. Hambro Magan. As part of the merger terms, a further 80 corporate financiers at NatWest have had their contracts rewritten to give them similar terms.

Combined with NatWest's existing Wall Street operations, the deal will make the bank the biggest British force in mergers and acquisitions, handling take-over deals worth more than £32 billion. The deal represents a huge coup for 50-year-old George Magan who founded J.O. Hambro Magan just eight years ago. He is to take over the chairmanship of the enlarged investment banking operation and is expected to get by far the largest deal.

A spokeswoman for the banking union, Bifu, said: "We are concerned at the distribution of money to a select few. The NatWest is cutting City notebook, page 11

'Dear diary, It is fun being PM!'

David McKie

ONE of the most enjoyable parts of being Prime Minister, John Major confides in the Spectator today, "is holding receptions at No. 10 or Chequers." He goes on to describe some with something like schoolboy glee.

Mr Major — or someone employing his byline — is writing the magazine's weekly Diary. The result is less obviously Pooteresque than Private Eye's spoof, The Secret Diary of John Major, aged 47. Yet some of it — "Mr Prodi, the Italian prime minister, had flown into Dublin in a very large plane. I suggested he had brought the deficit with him" — comes close enough to raise doubts about the writer. Could this too be pastiche?

Students of Mr Major's prose style, with its habit of taking a well-loved cliché and getting it slightly wrong, will savour the diary's account of a Downing Street thrash for famous sportsmen, including the England goalkeeper David Seaman. Noting that Seaman spent the evening surrounded by "a bevy of adoring girls", the Prime Minister quotes one as whispering: "He's a goalkeeper, isn't he? I know a good catch he could net."

Mr Major writes, "and I sat down and crossed out the same joke for Friday!" One line in particular may lead some to question the piece's authenticity. At the Downing Street reception, the author claims, several sportsmen had hairstyles "which would have dazzled the dreadlocked Rudd Gullitt". Gullitt is the manager and star performer of the team Mr Major supports — Chelsea. Analysts were quick to point out last night that Gullitt's first name is, in fact, Ruud.

Clarke routs the doubters, page 2; Tories in Bournemouth, page 5; Leader comment, page 8

Mother jailed for stopping violent father seeing child

Clare Longrigg and Alex Bellis

A MOTHER was jailed for six weeks yesterday for refusing to comply with a court order allowing her violent former partner to have contact with their daughter.



Dawn Austin, partner knocked her teeth out

Judge William Poulton at Canterbury crown court ruled that it would be far more harmful for the child to grow up without a relationship with her father than to see her mother go to prison.

Dawn Austin, aged 30, was jailed for six weeks for contempt of court over an order requiring the child to meet Lee Norton, who has a history of serious violence against her. She was last night in Holloway prison and her two children were in foster care.

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Inside Britain

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Conference sketch

Virtuoso Ken plays a blinder



Simon Hoggart

THE Tory Conference rose yesterday to acclaim its latest and most improbable darling: the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clarke.

ous goose pimples among many of the MPs who will vote for the next leader. It was Michael Heseltine who was said by Sir Julian Critchley to know where to find the cillitros of the Conservative Party.

Major plans bold assault on Blair to consolidate new-found unity after Heseltine helps scatter right

Clarke routs the doubters

Michael White Political Editor

JOHN Major will today lay claim to an unprecedented fifth Tory term by telling voters that 120 years of democratic politics have shown Britain that only the Conservatives can be relied on to deliver ever-wider "opportunities for all".

from John Redwood and his Fleet St allies, the Tory campaign is now certain to be fought on Mr Major's terms, his rivals were grudgingly conceding last night.

rightwing critics no concessions on budget tax cuts or the European single currency timetable. Mr Clarke won a 4½-minute standing ovation, during which Mr Major pointedly intervened to raise his Chancellor's arm in triumph.

rest of us. We would have to stay here." Though some activists and candidates were muttering last night about key debate over Europe being suppressed, most closet-Goldsmithites in the conference hall took it on the chin.

the Labour leader's jugular in a systematic way. What he will do is present his own "Honest John" credentials as a self-made man, determined to spread opportunity in the same spirit as Margaret Thatcher and a century earlier, Disraeli had done.

dignity". It fell to Mr Heseltine to mock Labour's Blackpool conference. "Five days, five soundbites and they think they are fit to govern for five years. No facts, no details, no costs. Soundbites substituted for substance. Public relations masquerading as public concern. Dream music — nightmare prospects."

Joanna Trollope to head children's reading drive



Lair of the book worm: the novelist Joanna Trollope at home

Aga-saga weaver summoned to find book worms in young couch potatoes

Sarah Boseley ONE of the country's most popular but most belittled writers, Joanna Trollope, author of the unkindly christened Aga-sagas, has been chosen by the Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, to chair a panel to promote children's reading.

Mrs Bottomley muses over the possibilities. An incentive may be offered to 11-to 16-year-olds to borrow good books from libraries — a badge may go down well — "for those who could demonstrate that they had read and understood the books on their return. Posing may involve a short comprehensive questionnaire, certified by a responsible adult." It all sounds like good, clean fun.

Reading list Joanna Trollope's favourite authors Past: George Elliot, Henry Fielding, Anthony Trollope Present: Jane Gardam, Rose Macaulay, Amy Tan, John Irving

attempts to compile lists of great and good literature for children have provoked an outcry from authors, teachers and readers, as traditionalists have denounced the outrageous modern literature and modernists have slammed the dusty classics.

An extract from The Rector's Wife The sitting room at Loxford Rectory was a surprise to Daniel Byrne. It had been a surprise to Loxford for 10 years, previously accustomed, as rural communities are, to modesty and neatness in the pastoral dwelling-house.



"How very nice," said Daniel, sitting down. He looked around him. "How comfortable. Tidiness makes me nervous."

Review

The grey man is saved for Labour

David McKie

Labour Party Political Broadcast

JOHN MAJOR came out of retirement last night in a shameless bid to make today's closing proceedings at the Conservative Party Conference look entirely ridiculous.

"Every day people are having their hard-earned money stolen by uncaring thieves!" Howard exclaims. "But surely, that's our job, Michael," says Major.

Sara Keays takes battle over Parkinson daughter to Europe

Claire Dyer Legal Correspondent

SARA Keays, the former mistress of the Tory party elder statesman, Lord Parkinson, is accusing the British Government of violating her rights to freedom of expression and respect for family life, in an application to the European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

to her child and which would have been of benefit to the public. The film could not be made without High Court consent because of injunctions banning publicity obtained by Lord Parkinson, Flora's father, and the Official Solicitor.

A High Court judge, Mr Justice Cazalet, refused to lift the injunction to allow the TV programme because he feared this would lead to a "torrent" of "turd and sensational" tabloid reports. Three Appeal Court judges ruled that the court's power to stop publicity in the circumstances was "in theory limitless".

Her application describes the judges as "elderly males of an élite class, who were unlikely to have had any personal experience of raising children with handicaps like Flora and who were apparently ill-disposed towards single mothers. They were suspicious of and antipathetic to the 'tabloid' press, which was overwhelming majority of British citizens choose to read."

We had sex, says accused

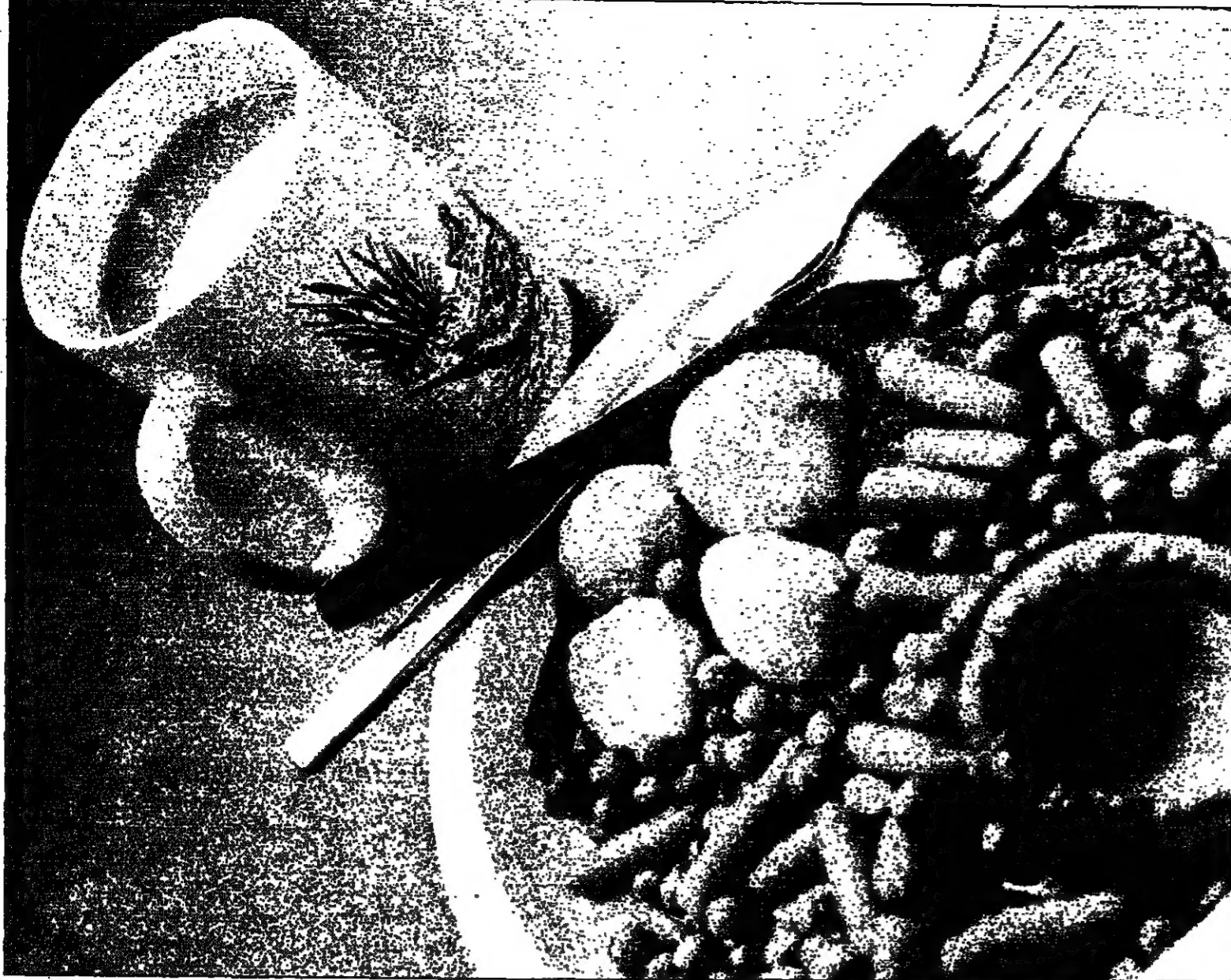
Stuart Millar

THE lorry driver who denies murdering French student Celine Figard told a court yesterday that they had sex in his cab after he asked her for a Christmas kiss in return for a lift.

Worcester on December 29 — 10 days after she was last seen leaving a service station on the M5 in Berkshire in the accused's white Mercedes lorry. Stuart Morgan, aged 37, of Poole, Dorset, told the jury during more than two hours in the witness box, that Ms Figard approached him for a lift to Fordingbridge, Hampshire, at Chicheley services. He explained he was heading for Southampton but she accepted a lift anyway.

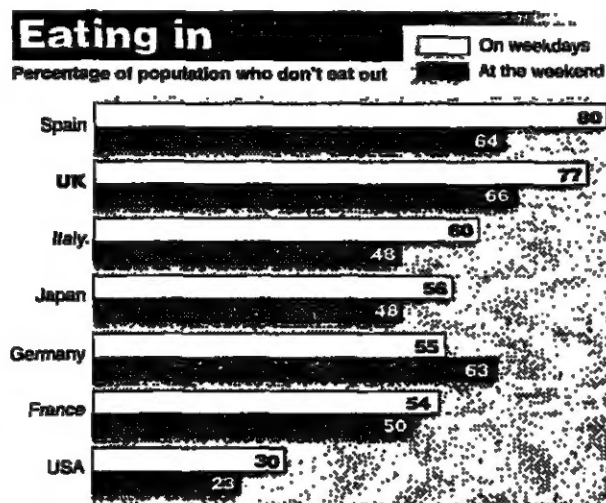
Yorkshire advertisement with 'AS SEEN ON TV' and 'FOR A CHANGE' stars, and text: 'You can't miss Yorkshire. It's been on everything from All Creatures Great and Small to Heartbeat. Find out why Yorkshire could claim to be the TV capital of Britain. RadioTimes IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT.'

Advertisement for a book or product with text: 'Even Britons not like British food, a survival. Apart from beef, that's BSE or not... You are allowed to respond to me and be... are quite relaxed Eddie Izzard takes...'



Food, glorious food... Roast dinner washed down with tea is standard British fare, though only a third of Britons rate it highly PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SLUITER

Even Britons do not like British food, a survey finds. Apart from our beef, that is — BSE or no BSE



Alex Dywel Smith in Paris

IT IS depressing but true: the British drink tea with meals, scoff endless sandwiches, and refuse to let BSE scare them off overdone Sunday roast beef. To make matters worse, they don't even like their national dish very much.

Other countries in Europe cannot praise their national dishes highly enough, according to a new survey of eating habits in

sight countries, but British self-respect has been eroded by years of fry-ups, baked beans and stodgy puddings: only 32 per cent of Britons believe British food is the best.

By comparison, 95 per cent of French people, 93 per cent of Italians, 88 per cent of Spaniards, 74 per cent of Germans, 67 per cent of Americans and Japanese, and 60 per cent of Brazilians think their national cuisine is the best.

Britons are second only

to Americans at eating snacks, and sandwiches are to Britons what hamburgers are to folk across the giant pond.

Asked to list food they ate every day, 47 per cent of Britons ticked "sandwiches/hamburgers", against 38 per cent of Americans and only 4 per cent of French people.

Mad cow or no mad cow, Britons are still fiercely loyal to British beef according to the survey, which questioned 6,500 people

during June and July. Asked whether, as a result of revelations about BSE, they had reduced their beef consumption, 59 per cent of Britons said they had not — a score matching countries unaffected by the scare.

One reason for the lack of admiration for British food could be that we also tend to spend the shortest time in the kitchen — 33 minutes on weekdays.

That changes at weekends, with Britons spending almost as long in the

kitchen as the French (1 hour 5 minutes per meal against 1 hour 12).

Dominique Mine, director in France of the British food promotion body, Food From Britain, said: "Britain is very advanced in pre-prepared dinners and I think the trends in Britain may be duplicated in other European countries."

The survey, published ahead of the Sial fair — a four-day binge for the world's food industries which begins in Paris on October 20 — also looked at socio-economic influences on the digestive tract.

In Britain, high earners and single people are the least likely to have breakfast. The over-55s and the least well-off spend the longest over breakfast.

Asked whether they personally prepared a weekday evening meal, 92 per cent of women said they did, but only 62 per cent of men. Women also spent longer preparing food.

Suspicion surrounds super-generous interest rates

Investors warned over Internet bank

Dan Atkinson

THE Bank of England yesterday said it may try to pull the plug on an Internet bank based in the Caribbean that offers super-generous interest rates to British customers.

Although unable to ban the grandly-named European Union Bank from advertising over the international computer system, the Bank may take action if its advertisements fail to meet UK standards.

European Union Bank was, until this summer, still claiming the Tory peer, Lord Mancroft, the 39-year-old former heroin addict turned medical charity patron, as its chairman, even though he announced in May he had left the organisation. It also claims to be the first offshore bank on the net.

Yesterday the Bank of England warned all British people that deposits with EUB — which is based in Antigua, one of the most loosely-regulated territories in the world — were not covered by the UK deposit-protection scheme.

EUB has advertised for people to send money over the Internet. It claims to employ ultra-secure anti-hacking technology, although the legal position of British customers



Lord Mancroft: quit offshore bank in May

should the bank fall would be as insecure whether they sent their money over the net or by traditional post or wire-transfer methods.

A Bank source said yesterday that its main concern was to ensure people did not get ripped off. With EUB offering rates of 2.75 per cent on current account deposits of £1,000 — against just 0.3 per cent on offer from Barclays and 0.2 per cent from Midland — the Bank of England wants to avoid a repeat of the 1988 Barlow Clowes affair, in which offshore investors lost their money and claimed the

British Government ought to have protected them.

Forecasting such an outcome this time, a Bank source said that "concealment has to bite". The source added that the Bank retained powers over advertisements for offshore bank accounts, even though it had no power to regulate deposits taken outside the UK, and would consider moving against any internet provider carrying unlawful promotions for EUB.

But the Bank said there was no way to protect someone determined to invest in EUB.

The Inland Revenue confirmed it was monitoring services offered by Internet-based companies such as EUB for the setting up of offshore tax-haven companies. The possibility of taxable funds disappearing into uncrackable coded computer accounts was a real danger.

EUB has no connection with the European Union in Brussels and no client in Britain has complained to the UK authorities. The Bank said yesterday's warning was a pre-emptive measure.

Among recent EUB publicity on the Internet is a statement that "clients may establish an international business corporation on-line through European Union Bank, taking full advantage of Antigua's favourable tax laws".

Massacre trial founders

David Beresford in Johannesburg

THE murder prosecution against South Africa's former defence minister, General Magnus Malan, and other retired security force commanders appeared to be crumbling yesterday when the judge labelled the key state witness a liar.

Judge Jan Hugo acquitted six of the 16 defendants at the Supreme Court in Durban, on the first day of a judgment which he is expected to complete today. The six were alleged to be hit men trained by the South African army.

If Gen Malan and the officers accused with him are also cleared it will be a big setback for the African National Congress government and Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Truth Commission in their attempts to uncover the role of the military in the "dirty war" of the 1980s and early 1990s.

The 16 accused — including four retired generals — faced charges of murder, attempted murder and conspiracy to murder in the KwaMakutha massacre in Natal on January 21 1987, in which 13 civilians, most of them women and children, were killed.

The massacre was alleged to have been carried out by a hit squad, who underwent combat training at a secret military camp in Namibia. The state alleged that the target was a suspected ANC activist — who was not killed.

The crucial witness for the prosecution was a military officer, Captain J.P. Opperman, who claimed he was the commander of the hit squad.

Judge Hugo said that Capt Opperman was "a lying witness in certain respects and unreliable in others".

The judge also noted that the state had conceded the unreliability of a second important prosecution witness, a former military intelligence agent, Andre Cloete. He said the evidence of all three state witnesses had to be approached with caution, because they were accomplices. There were also indications they had been coached.

The judge said the poor planning and execution of the attack supported the defence contention that it was not an authorised military operation, but a "frolic". The large quantity of weapons used contradicted Capt Opperman's claim that the target was one man. "It seems likely that Opperman must have had backing from somewhere," he said. "The question is from where and from whom."

Baseball hero, 12, lends hand to Yankees on the way to the World Series

Ian Katz in New York

A WEEK ago Jeffrey Maier was another 12-year-old New York kid, praying for his beloved Yankees to reach the World Series. Yesterday he was being hailed as the hero of one of the biggest games of the baseball season. And the villain.

The schoolboy guaranteed himself a place in baseball history when he reached over a boundary wall at Yankee Stadium and grabbed a ball during a championship game between the home team and the Baltimore Orioles.

The ball, hit by a Yankees player, had been heading into the catcher's mitt of a Baltimore fielder. Instead the boy deflected it into the stands, converting it into a home run for the New York team.

The Yankees, who had been trailing by one run, went on to win the game in overtime, moving a step closer to a place in the World Series.

Yesterday the boy was feted as a hero by a city which craves a return to the glory days of Babe Ruth and Joe DiMaggio.

"I'm the son of a mayor of New York, this morning (former mayor) Ed Koch and I would both be in trouble," said Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

Jeffrey was rather less popular in Baltimore and Wash-



The schoolboy intervention that led Yankees to victory

ington, which has adopted the nearby Orioles since it lost its own baseball team. Furious Orioles fans insisted the Baltimore player, Tony Tarasco, would have caught the ball if the boy had not interfered.

"To me it was like a magic trick because the ball just disappeared in mid-air," Tarasco said.

Technically the controversial home run should have been disallowed but the nearest umpire did not realise the boy had deflected the ball until he watched replays on television. By then, the result was final.

Jeffrey was yesterday doing the rounds of the morning TV shows sporting a Yankees uniform and beaming from ear to ear. His only regret was that he had not managed to hang on to the ball. "I am not used to seeing balls hit that high in Little League," he said.

Mother jailed for denying father access to their child

continued from page 1

are appalled. We don't think that in a situation where there is a violent man involved, contact should be presumed to be in the interests of the child."

Julie Bindel, of the National Conference on Violence, Abuse and Women's Citizenship, added: "When all too often men who commit serious acts of violence against women and children are not apprehended or imprisoned, to put this mother in custody when she is only trying to protect herself is an outrage."

A fortnight ago Ms Austin, from Canterbury, was given a six week suspended prison sentence for failing to comply with the contact order. She was given another chance to take her four-year-old daughter to Mr Norton but refused.

During their six year relationship Ms Austin has alleged that Mr Norton has knocked out her front teeth, and tried to throw her off a first floor balcony.

Mr Norton has also served time in prison for domestic violence, after he broke his former wife's jaw in three places. But he said before yesterday's hearing: "I am not in the slightest bit interested in getting at Dawn. I just want to see my daughter. I miss her very much and the longer this goes on, the more difficult it will be to re-establish our relationship."

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Insurance Services

You are allowed to swear on the radio in Iceland, so I politely respond to requests for swearing by saying f*#@ and s#*% and b#*#\$% whenever asked. I realise the Icelandic people are quite relaxed — like well-wrapped-up Dutch people. Eddie Izzard takes us through his first world tour

Friday Review cover story

4 BRITAIN

News in brief

Another victim of new CJD variant

A 33-YEAR-OLD London woman is the latest victim of the new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease, which some scientists believe may have been passed to humans as a result of the BSE epidemic.

Like the 13 other victims of the new variant, confirmed by the government's CJD surveillance unit in Edinburgh, symptoms began with mood changes, forgetfulness, tremors of the limbs and ultimately loss of balance.

A family member said yesterday: "We are obviously very concerned about the possibility of the disease being passed in some way to her two children, but doctors have told us that there is no evidence that this happens."

'Bizarre sex act' death

A PRIMARY school headmaster died during a bizarre sex act, an inquest at Basingstoke, Hampshire, heard yesterday.

North East Hampshire coroner, Andrew Bradley, was told by Mr Calvert's wife Susan that about a year ago she suspected her husband of using women's make-up.

'Show-off' killer driver jailed

A DRIVER who killed three people while showing off in his sports car, and then fled the scene, was jailed for eight years at the High Court in Stirling yesterday.

Fraser McDowall, 36, was found guilty of the culpable homicide of pensioners Thomas and Jean McCullum and Sheena Young, 36, in a high speed, early morning crash last May which also left Mrs Young's 17-year-old son Jamie brain-damaged.

Workmen die in sewer

HEALTH and safety inspectors were investigating last night after two council workmen died at a sewage pumping station near Swansea after collapsing when they were overcome by fumes in an underground inspection chamber.

Call to ban council sunbeds

A BAN on sunbeds at council-run leisure centres was urged yesterday by a skin expert, Jonathan Norris, consultant dermatologist at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary.

Brothers' hanging riddle

POLICE are investigating the riddle of two middle-aged brothers, believed to have been from Leeds, found hanging on Tuesday from the same branch of a tree in what is thought to have been a suicide pact at a countryside beauty spot outside York.

Intended victim wounded twice in 'bloody feud' before attacker was shot by marksmen, court told
Police shots felled 'hitman'

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

UNDERCOVER police marksmen shot a hitman just as he was about to complete a contract killing, an Old Bailey jury was told yesterday.

The officer in charge of the operation had had to strike a delicate balance between the gathering of evidence and the saving of life, the court was told.

The shootings in south London on September 20 last year were the result of a "long-standing and bloody feud" Nigel Sweeney, prosecuting, told the court. A plan bearing "all the hallmarks of a contract killing" had been devised, and at one stage it was possible that three members of a south London gang would be shot at the same time.

Michael Boyle, aged 46, from Dublin, had shot Anthony Brindle three times outside his home in Rotherhithe, and was about to finish him off when two police officers opened fire, Mr Sweeney said.

"Fearing for Mr Brindle's life and their own they fired 14 shots at Boyle with their rifles," Boyle was hit five times, both legs were wounded. Boyle is pleading not guilty to attempting to murder Mr Brindle and to possession of two handguns with intent to endanger life.

David Roads, 52, from south London, is pleading not guilty to attempted murder and possession of firearms. The Crown alleges that Roads equipped Boyle with guns, stolen vehicles and safe houses.

The court heard that the Brindles were a south London family well known to the police. Roads was a London criminal called Peter Daly. A number of people had died in the feud.

Boyle had allegedly been hired as a hitman and the police had learned of the plot. He had travelled from Dublin to London at least six times between April and September in connection with the plan, the court heard. The jury was



Scene of the shooting at Rotherhithe, south London. Below, Anthony Brindle, shot twice before police could intervene. MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODMAN

shown surveillance film of Boyle within a few yards of Mr Brindle.

Disguised in a wig and using a stolen van, he had driven to the small square where Mr Brindle lived. He was armed with a Browning semi-automatic pistol and a Magnum, Mr Sweeney said.

Undercover police were anticipating that Boyle would leave his vehicle to shoot Mr Brindle, at which stage they would arrest him. Marksmen were hidden in a British Gas van close by.

But when Mr Brindle emerged from his home, Boyle opened fire from inside the van. Mr Brindle was hit in the elbow, chest and leg, and fled back to his home. Boyle pursued him, the jury heard. The armed officers challenged him but he did not

stop. He was hit in the elbow, chest, shoulder blades and left hand.

The court also heard that in February last year Boyle had been arrested in Dublin and had become an informer for the Garda. He gave them information about a Dublin criminal, George Mitchell, and told them that Mitchell had a gang from Northern Ireland on their side in the feud.

Mr Sweeney said, "Two other Brindles, Patrick and George, were possible targets." Boyle said he was going to England. He and two others

had a target and three hits would possibly be done on the same night."

The Garda told Boyle not to take part in the shootings but he ignored their advice, Mr Sweeney said. The Garda said they would inform the English police.

Commander Roy Clark of the South East Regional Crime Squad, was placed in a dilemma, the court was told. If he informed the Brindles of the plot, there was a danger — "given the bloody background to this dispute" — that they would carry out a pre-emptive strike. He had had to balance the need to get enough evidence with the necessity of preserving life. Medical assistance was on standby throughout the operation.

The case continues.



Victory for part-timers

Appeal Court supports casual worker's claim for sick pay

Sources: Mike Labour Editor

HUNDREDS of thousands of casual workers could win basic employment rights after the Court of Appeal ruled yesterday that a woman who had worked for nine months on a series of one-day contracts was entitled to sick pay.

Cherie Booth, QC, wife of the Labour leader Tony Blair, successfully argued that Sally Brown, a care worker with the Granta Housing Society, had had "continuity of employment" and was therefore covered by the terms of the Employment Protection Act.

Ms Brown, who looked after mentally ill people full-time as a day care assistant for the Cambridge housing association,

was refused statutory sick pay after she injured her back on the job in June 1982 and was off work for nearly six months.

All employees earning more than £61 a week are entitled to sick pay after three months, but Grants refused Ms Brown on the grounds that she was employed on rolling one-day contracts.

Her decision was upheld by the Department of Social Security and a social security commissioner, who said she was no longer employed after the day she was injured and was sent home from work.

But Lord Justice Nourse ruled yesterday that Ms Brown's contract had become indefinite under the act and she was entitled to sick pay rights after three months of uninterrupted employment.

Ms Brown, who is supported by the Child Poverty Action Group, will now go back to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal to try to secure an estimated £1,200 sick pay.

Unions hailed the judgment as a breakthrough and the Trades Union Congress said it would now seek to use the case to extend other employment rights to casual workers.

John Monks, the TUC general secretary, said too many employers were "trying to use temporary contracts to escape their obligations to treat employees fairly."

There are about 1.7 million casual workers and the number is growing. Supply teachers and agency nurses should benefit from yesterday's decision.

Ms Brown said she was surprised at the outcome. "I am pleased that it is all over and that I have been able to set a precedent for other people in my position."

Lisburn bombs: man held

Bruton warns IRA hardliners: 'No more spectaculars or beatings'

David Sharrock Ireland Correspondent

A MAN was in police custody last night in connection with the IRA warning bomb attack on the Army's headquarters in Lisburn, Northern Ireland.

It is understood the man was arrested at his west Belfast home at 7am yesterday and taken to Castleside holding centre for questioning.

The RUC can detain the man, believed to be in his 30s, for seven days under anti-terrorist legislation.

The arrest came less than 24 hours after the officer in charge of the investigation appealed to the public for information about cars used in the attack and after a description of one suspect was issued.

It emerged yesterday that the emergency created by the bomb attack on The Oval barracks forced surgeons at Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast to postpone a number of brain tumour operations.

Four of the most serious bomb casualties are still in intensive care, and a soldier with head injuries and burns is still critically ill.

In Dublin, the prime minister, John Bruton, renewed his attack on Sinn Fein, revealing that his Government will shortly bring forward legislation on decommissioning of paramilitary arms. Most of the IRA's arsenal is hidden in the Republic.

Mr Bruton told the Daily Mail: "Let me say this to the hardliners: if the republican movement want to be taken seriously as democrats, with all

the benefits that confers, they will have to get rid of the tactical use of violence — for good."

"No more Lisburns. No more spectaculars. No more beatings. No coded warnings. Just the ballot box."

He warned the republicans: "The Government will continue to carry forward the political process, with or without Sinn Fein."

Addressing Unionists, he said the people in the Republic had "no agenda of a progressive takeover of Northern Ireland against the wishes of the majority of people there."

"If there ever was such an agenda or mentality here, it has certainly gone. There is no pan-nationalist front intent on pursuing a malign agenda to undermine the identity or heritage of unionists in their involvement in the United Kingdom.

New row looms over EC plan to cut fish catch

Stephen Barbas in Brussels

THE Government was on the verge of another confrontation with the European Commission over the fishing industry last night, as officials warned that it would not accept additional limits on catches without action to stop the national fishing fleet being bought up by foreign companies.

The row is likely to break at Monday's meeting of European fisheries ministers in Luxembourg, with the commission renewing its demand for a 40 per cent cut in the fishing catch for some species over the next six years — and Britain insisting the so-called quota-hopping problem is resolved first.

Other member states are also opposed to such a drastic cut in the catch.

When the commission first put forward its plans in the summer it caused an outcry by suggesting a cut in the number of fishing boats. But yesterday it appeared to be giving ground to governments, by insisting it was the number of fish caught that would have to be cut.

Emma Bonino, the Italian fisheries commissioner,

warned that stocks would be largely destroyed if restrictions were not imposed.

"There are too many fishermen and too few fish. We must do something to sort out the imbalance: market forces alone will simply lead to bankruptcies, increased costs and decimation of stocks — and the consequences will be

irreversible," she said.

The Government and the fishing industry have been increasingly irritated that British boats are being sold to European companies — particularly Spanish ones — which thereby get access to the British quota of fish.

It has been aggravated by the loss of a case in the European Court of Justice outlawing the Government's attempts to prevent the foreign takeover, and instructing it to compensate the Spanish companies affected.

Mrs Bonino dismissed British fears. "More and more people whose economic activity is not profitable will be pushed to sell their boats."

"More and more people whose economic activity is not profitable will be pushed to sell their boats," she said.

danger — will be reduced, but those for tuna, herring and Baltic sprats will not.

Scientists have warned that some species are in danger of being fished to extinction in the North Sea and North Atlantic, but Tony Baldry, the fisheries minister, has insisted Britain will not agree to major revisions in the amount each country can catch under the Common Fisheries Policy unless quota-hopping is prevented.

The Government and the fishing industry have been increasingly irritated that British boats are being sold to European companies — particularly Spanish ones — which thereby get access to the British quota of fish.

'Crisis' over black pupils' exclusion

Donald MacLeod Education Correspondent

EXPULSIONS of black children from schools have reached "crisis proportions" in some areas, according to a report yesterday showing three out of four pupils are barred for their attitude, not violence or bullying.

Black Caribbean pupils were being excluded at six times the rate of white pupils, and while the problem was worse for boys, black girls were also suffering disproportionate levels of exclusion, said David Gillborn, of London University's Institute of Education.

Urgent government action was needed to establish a new code of practice on exclusions, said Herman Unseley, chairman of the

Commission for Racial Equality, yesterday. There had been a conspiracy of silence over the additional health and education costs as well as stress on the families.

Permanent exclusions have risen rapidly since the introduction of league tables and parental choice, and were being used for a wide and ill-defined range of bad behaviour, Dr Gillborn found. His figures challenge the picture painted by teaching unions of schools having to expel violent youngsters for the safety of staff and fellow pupils, only to have them flogged back on the classroom by appeal panels or governors.

Physical aggression or bullying was the reason for only 27 per cent of all exclusions, according to official figures. The great majority were dealt

with for constantly refusing to comply with school rules, verbal abuse or insolence.

"In some areas it is no exaggeration to say that the exclusion of black young people has reached crisis proportions. In less than a full academic year more than one in 10 of Nottingham's black secondary pupils were involved in exclusion procedures. About one in 40 white children were involved during the same period (1985/90)."

In two Nottinghamshire schools, teachers recently threatened to strike rather than accept unruly (white) pupils back into the classroom. However, Dr Gillborn found that nationally only one in 20 exclusions were overturned by school governors.

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Large vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page, partially cut off. Visible text includes 'Clarke v...', 'doubter...', 'defiant...', 'Chancellor...', 'Shepherd o...', 'ways to dea...', 'Bottomley b...', 'Smithers on ven...'.

Clarke wins over doubters with defiant message

Michael White
Political Editor

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, yesterday stood on a prolonged and defiantly candid message about the hard choices they face on tax cuts and the European single currency.

The embattled chancellor contrived to use a well-crafted speech to yoke the two issues together as he held out the prospect of moving towards a 20p basic tax rate, eventual abolition of capital gains and inheritance tax and the 40p reduction of public spending to below 40 per cent of national wealth.

"Our policy on economic and monetary union is part of our policy on the economy," he argued after hammering away at the central theme of the week that Britain's economic prospects are now the best for a generation.

Amid speculation that one false sentence might precipitate heckling from his ardent Eurosceptic critics, Mr Clarke embraced the cabinet line. He insisted John Major had been right to say the single currency project would affect Britain whether it was in or out.

"It is in Britain's interest to keep all our options open. We should decide when we have to, not before. When we decide Britain's choice will be free. By staying in the game, we sacrifice nothing and we gain much," he told the con-

ference before joining the increasingly vocal cabinet plea for unity before the election.

Proclaiming his party to be "tax-cutters by instinct", Mr Clarke warned the Budget in six weeks' time would not include unsustainable cuts that have to be reversed.

His claim that ordinary families are now 5700 a year better off than in 1992 was quickly rejected by Labour's Treasury team. Making allowance for 22 new taxes — the £17 billion Lamont-Clarke drive to curb borrowing — they were £130 a year worse off, Labour insisted.

Mr Clarke's goal was to dampen down his party's immediate expectations. "To earn the trust of the British people, we have to follow one Tory golden rule. We only cut taxes when we can afford to, and when it is good for the economy," he said in his speech.

Faced with an audience packed with potential critics of both cautious policies, Mr Clarke insisted that they could still win the coming general election, but only by following his advice — not overturning it under a new chancellor as many of them want. "If Labour fight the election on the economy, they

know they will lose. If we fight on the economy we will win. And with a Tory government back in power, the economy will do even better," the chancellor assured doubters.

The cheers which punctuated the speech were loudest when left and right in the audience could agree on a proposition. They cheered noisily when he declared opposition to the EU's single currency. But the loudest laugh came when he mocked his Labour shadow and frequent sparring partner. "Gordon Brown bases his policies on the Dolly Parton school of economics: an unbelievable figure, blown out of all proportion, with no visible means of support," said Mr Clarke.

In his passage on the single currency, the chancellor sought to press last April's Cabinet compromise in a positive light, despite pressure ever since to push Mr Major to rule out early British membership.

All Conservatives agree on far more things in the European Union than we ever debate. "Amid loud applause he went on: "We all support a partnership of nations and we are all hostile — I am hostile to a United States of Europe."

John Major prolonged the applause by joining Mr Clarke and raising their arms in triumph after the chancellor had wound up an anodyne economic debate that had been organised to prevent critics of the key policies from airing their views.

Leader comment, page 6



Kenneth Clarke yesterday... 'We only cut taxes when we can afford to'

John Major Conservative Party leader

Progress report

Thatcher's last speech as party leader was at Bournemouth. John Major's might be too. If the polls translate into votes at the general election, he will not be Prime Minister next time the Conservatives gather, and it is Michael Forsyth and John Rowland who have their way. He will not be party leader either. By the standards his Government has set since the 1992 election, the last 12 months have not been that bad for him. Resignations have been kept to a minimum: David Heathcoat-Amory from the Government and Emma Nicholson from the party. The legislative programme was kept as controversy-free as possible, and the economy has been improving, though not accompanied by the elusive left-good factor. Europe has continued to torment him, not helped by BSE.

Today's performance

Every speech since he has become Prime Minister has been billed as 'meats or break', and in the end it has not made any difference. But he could do with a good speech to motivate his party to get out and work during the election campaign. There will be passages on Northern Ireland, virtually ignored by conference all week, the good economic statistics and the dangers of a Tony Blair government.

Prospects

Chances of inspired oratory? None. The traditional shape of the party conference was changed this week to accommodate his poor delivery. The Question and Answer session worked, showing him relaxed, less stiff, with a sense of humour. Expect more of the 'man of the common people' theme if he can find a way of getting it into the formal structure of the end-of-conference speech. A good conference for the Conservatives, with the unruly Euro-sceptics curbing their excesses, apart from a few rowdy choruses of Land of Hope and Glory, but virtually no one in private harbours much hope of winning the election.

Today's business

- Appeal for party funds by Lord Parkinson
- PM's speech

Chancellor considers how he can justify tax cuts

Analysis

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

KENNETH Clarke was slightly disingenuous yesterday when he said the debate in the Tory Party was not about whether to cut taxes, but when and how to cut them.

Few are in any doubt about the "when". Taxes will be cut on November 26. What the Chancellor has yet to work out is the "how".

Norman Lamont in 1992

had a simple solution to justifying tax cuts when public finances were in a mess; he came up with spurious figures for borrowing that were proved to be 57 billion awry once the Conservatives had won their fourth term.

The current Chancellor knows neither the markets nor the voters would buy another transparent attempt to cook the books. "To earn and keep the trust of the British people, we have to follow one Tory golden rule," he said yesterday. "We only cut taxes when we can afford to, and when it is good for the economy."

Given that the Public Sec-

tor Borrowing Requirement is currently on course to be more than £25 billion this financial year, the City sees no justification for tax cuts.

But in view of Labour's enormous poll lead, Mr Clarke's task next month is to make tax cuts "believable". Anything else would risk an adverse reaction from the City, leading to higher interest rates and the final snuffing out of Mr Major's electoral hopes.

Mr Clarke will have three aims in mind sketching out his Budget proposals. First, he will want to cut taxes. That will mean a penny off the basic rate of income tax to 23

pence, costing £2 billion. This will bring the Government one step closer to its long-term aim of a 20 per cent basic rate of income tax. But Mr Clarke would also like to approach the 20 per cent target from the other end — by widening the lower rate 20 per cent band to include more taxpayers.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) calculates that £1 billion would widen the lower band by £1,350 the first £5,250 of taxable income.

The Chancellor's second priority will be to increase public spending in the key areas of health and education. Finally, Mr Clarke will want

to show the markets that he takes the size of the PSBR seriously by knocking perhaps another £1-1.5 billion off public borrowing. All told, this could add up to £6 billion, which would have to be found either through reductions in public spending or higher taxation in non-sensitive areas.

Lower than expected inflation means the Government can deliver the same volume of public services for less money. According to the IFS and Goldman Sachs, this should be worth £500 million.

Another easy target is public capital spending, since Mr Clarke can claim that any cuts will be compensated for

by the Private Finance Initiative. This could provide him with another £2 billion. As for tax, the curb on share-buybacks announced this week should net £450 million, while a doubling of the insurance premium tax to 5 per cent would garner £80 million.

The IFS believe the Chancellor may have his eye on tax relief on profit-related pay, which costs the Exchequer an estimated £1.5 billion a year. If that is still not enough, Mr Clarke can always juggle around with next year's £4.6 billion contingency reserve.

But somehow, and from somewhere, the money will be found.

Shepherd offers schools tough ways to deal with unruly pupils

Rebecca Smithers and John Carvel

TEACHERS are to be given tough new powers to discipline unruly pupils including detention after school without parents' consent, the Government announced yesterday in a package of reforms for an Education Bill to be introduced this autumn.

"The ambitions of the many must not be thwarted by the blatant hooliganism of the few," said Gillian Shepherd, the Education and Employment Secretary, in a speech designed to put discipline, diversity and higher educational standards at the centre of the election battlefield.

Her strong line was welcomed by headteachers' leaders, but the National Consumer Council said proposal for parents to sign binding contracts covering homework, behaviour, dress and attendance would be "unworkable and counter-productive", undermining recent improvements in partnership between parents and teachers.

The Association of Metro-

politan Authorities said teachers would be unable to implement her plan to detain pupils without parents' permission during the lunch break or after school. Mrs Shepherd knew parents had to be at least consulted under European human rights law, and compulsory detention on the day a pupil committed a misdemeanour was impractical.

Mrs Shepherd said her new measures built on Conservative principles which were "about achieving, about independence and success, about fulfilling potential, about ambitions and aspirations".

The controversial assisted places schemes — which Labour has pledged to scrap — would be extended to private primary schools. And in a further opening up of "clear blue water" between the two parties, Mrs Shepherd pledged to establish new grammar schools.

The Government will extend it from two pilots covering 8,000 people to around a dozen unemployment "black-spots" including the North-east.

It also envisages a greater



Gillian Shepherd... 'Mantant hooliganism of the few'

role for the private sector, which could take the schemes over completely.

In addition, plans to give every young person more opportunities to learn, get qualified and prepare for work will be set out in a December white paper. This will explore ways of strengthening A-level and other qualifications for

Mawhinney red-faced after 'Labour defector' unmasked

Michael White

THE Conservative chairman, Dr Brian Mawhinney, was forced to retreat in disarray along Bournemouth's seafront yesterday when a much-trumpeted "Labour defector" turned out to be less than the genuine article.

Within hours of Marco Forgiione, a 26-year-old self-employed caterer from Yeovil, being introduced to a press conference, he had been denounced as a non-member by Labour and revealed as a Tory activist in Paddy Ashdown's Somerset patch for at least two years. Mr Forgiione is a prolific letter-writer, and he uses the local Tory HQ as his address, Liberal Democrat officials said.

Mr Forgiione had been billed as a former "parliamentary adviser to leading Labour MP, Keith Vaz," a member of Labour's environmental team and an aide to the Labour leadership. He was "a man who had even

worked alongside Jack Straw. "Behind the scenes, I saw the reality of what is going on in New Labour. I saw in-fighting, bickering, scheming and policies cobbled together for political expediency. I saw New Labour's egos, the posturing for personal ambition, the wallowing in bickering and the back-stabbing," Mr Forgiione said.

But in his first appearance before the press Mr Forgiione admitted under questioning he had never actually been a Labour Party member, or voted Labour at a general election, though he had at local level.

Dr Mawhinney has had his share of mishaps since succeeding the accident-prone Jeremy Hanley as chairman. Learning from last year's ill-starred jibe at the Camden Asian Women's Hopscotch Group during his conference speech, the chairman cut his losses yesterday and hurriedly ushered away his charge away into the Bournemouth conference centre.

Bottomley bursts into surprise song

Rebecca Smithers on venture into verse

HERITAGE Secretary Virginia Bottomley yesterday unveiled plans for "OBE-style" awards for young people in a move to offer recognition to Britain's "unsung heroes".

But in a highly political speech which began with a sustained attack on Labour's plans to reform the constitution, Mrs Bottomley won more applause for her singing.

Delegates appeared stunned when she broke off from her prepared speech to deliver her own rendition of "TMS Tony Blair" in the "savvy opera" style of Gilbert and Sullivan.

To the tune of the Ruler of the Queen's Navy from HMS Pinafore, Mrs Bottomley sang

unaccompanied and somewhat unmelodiously. After the first verse the audience cheered, thinking Mrs Bottomley had finished, but she carried on.

Mrs Bottomley revealed later that Dr Madsen Pirie, head of the rightwing think tank, the Adam Smith Institute, had "helped" her.

Other politicians who have ventured into verse include Lady Thatcher, who "lilted" a couplet to the tune of "Daisy, Daisy", concerning the two leaders of the Liberal-SDP Alliance, David Steel and David Owen, and Lord Cullaghan who teased trade union leaders in 1978 over the date of the 1979 election by singing: "There was I, waiting at the church..."

HMS BLEAR

*As a boy he went to public school
And he learned one very important rule:
If you say what people want to hear
Your advancement soon will be very clear*

*He used that rule so ruthlessly
That now he is the ruler of the Labour Party*

*In listening some time he passed
And adopted all the manners of the chattering class
He drinks white wine and he acted cool
And he sent his son to an off-out school*

*He went in style to Tuscanos
And now he is the ruler of the Labour Party*

*Spy-doctors rule. He stepped all thought
He gaged John Prescott and he banned Clare Short
Now he only says what people think is nice
And he offers you this piece of very wise advice:*

*Just smile through your teeth and avoid police
And you all could be rulers of the Labour Party*

Bournemouth 96

JOHN MAJOR'S shirt-sleeve session on Wednesday has caused a row at ITN. Political correspondent Tom Bradley filed a report on the session for the early evening bulletin in which he said that the PM took his jacket off "Tony Blair style". Within minutes ITN's Thatcher-enbodied political commissar Dame Sue ("I can pick up the phone whenever I want to and speak to John Major") Tinson came on to demand immediate withdrawal of the Blair reference and an extra slice of Major, threatening unactionable consequences for ITN if her orders were not carried out. They were.

NEIL HAMILTON may not have been among us this week, but he has at least contributed an article to the conference edition of the Thatcherite magazine Forward. In it he advocates the privatisation of the welfare state along Chilean lines. It calls to mind those warm conference evenings in the 1980s when such free-thinkers of the right would gather at fringe meetings excitedly chanting "Thatcher Reagan, Sotha, Pinochet." Happy days.

IN EVERY previous Conservative Party conference at Bournemouth, the press have been dumped in the swimming pool, which, suitably drained for the occasion has served as our working area. This year, the swimming pool has been turned into a champagne and sea food bar and the press have been consigned to an area which seems suspiciously like an underground car park.

Or at least some of us have. The Murdoch press and the Telegraph have been accommodated in plusher quarters nearer the watching eyes of the party press officers. They get carpets, a proper ceiling and heating. Lefty reprobrates like the Guardian and the Fi-

'Secret weapon Stormin' Norma wins hands down'

Extracts from John Major's diary in this week's Spectator

CONFERENCES are fought on the beaches of the English seaside. I was about 16 when I attended one for the first time. I can't remember much about it, except I couldn't really afford to go. But I did and I became even more hooked on politics... The modern technology of speech making is so artificial. The microphones, the lapel mikes, the camera angles... and the awful, chesting glass autocue patented by Ronald Reagan...

I spent most of September on tour around the country. Norma came with me as she usually does, although this year the tour had quite a different air. This year the press had invented "Stormin' Norma, the Secret Weapon" (No invention this, it has been true for years.) And so Norma attracted more cameras than I did. This is the first time for years the media has got its visual priorities right...

I left the [European Union summit in Dublin] after the meeting, but before dinner. "This caused some excitement among more idle folk who didn't bother to find out when I had told the Irish I was leaving, or why. So the Sunday press proclaimed it a snub! ... I didn't tell the Taoiseach why I left early, but I can now exclusively reveal it was the weekend of our 26th wedding anniversary and given a choice between dinner with Norma or 15 men, Norma won hands down..."

On the sidelines of the Dublin meeting I had discussions with three Socialist prime ministers about the recorded

video messages they had sent to the Labour conference. One looked surprised that I mentioned this because, he said, such behaviour is routine in the Socialist International. The second looked a bit wounded and the third distinctly defensive. Probably they had seen how their fraternal greetings had been used. They will learn that this present Labour Party is not very scrupulous... Like most people, I like a lunchtime stroll to get away from my desk. Sadly, the days are gone when I could nip out for a quiet walk and return invigorated. These days, a "quiet" walk is shared with the cream of the Met, and interrupted by friendly tourists from Milwaukee and Tokyo...

There is often a price to be paid for these walks and, sure enough, as I re-entered No 10, there was John Holmes, my foreign affairs private secretary, in his hand an ugly-looking file and in his eye, a wicked look. "We have this small problem," he said. "Small? Not so, Sir Humphrey would have been proud of him."



Shirty dame gives ITN short shrift

Michael Hebel

MICHAEL HEBEL-TINE's contribution to the collection of Cabinet ministers' favourite pudding recipes. But I wonder if his Blackcurrant and Kirsch Sorbet is not also a metaphor for his conference speeches?

Boil sugar and water together for 20 minutes. Allow syrup to cool. Strain the blackcurrants into the syrup. Stir with lemon juice and Kirsch (sorry, Kirsch).

Allow to set. And serve it up each autumn at the seaside.

IF YESTERDAY was indeed the last time Hesel-tine addressed a Tory conference then at least he went out in style, sporting the Guards tie which he is entitled to wear by virtue of his brief sojourn in the Welsh Guards in the 1950s.

This Hesel-tinian habit once provoked Willie Whitelaw to remark that he could never quite trust a chap who wore his Guards tie outside central London.

Martin Kettle

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Dignity blooms among the damned

Europe reeled when a leper colony was discovered in Romania after the 1989 revolution. Ed Vulliamy reports from Tichilesti by the Danube on the battle against an ancient enemy

WAIT for death to come," says Mihai Buzatu, his disfigured face and body like melted wax, sitting on the spot where he has lived for decades and knows he will die. "What else is there for us to wait for?"

Today, doctors gather for a World Health Organisation conference aimed at eradicating leprosy before the new millennium one of the most mysterious and awe-inspiring of diseases, which curses Mr Buzatu's leprosy.

Most of the 39 patients are healed, but forced to remain in the colony bearing their scars: limbs or fingers missing, faces and bodies disfigured. They sit chatting on benches in the courtyard.

There has long been a suspicion that the journalists' perk contributes to complacency about reporting on corruption or the illegal activities of MPs.

In the provincial press MPs are often owners or on the board and can control appointments.

Some papers, such as the daily Le Figaro, also have a stable of pro-government MPs as columnists who benefit from the tax concession.

Dozens of MPs have defended their support for the tax privilege by saying that the timing — in the run-up to the 1998 general election — is bad. They also claim that

About 1.26 million people have leprosy, 600,000 cases are diagnosed annually, and 2.4 million people are disabled by it

Left Bank to lose heart of its history

Alex Duval Smith in Paris
IN CAFES where tourists pay 20 francs (£2.50) for an espresso just to keep Sartre's seat warm, glares are darting over the rims of half-moon spectacles: the soul of Saint-Germain-des-Prés is for sale.

brought the world bohemian chic, ready-to-wear is seen as the fashion equivalent of McDonald's.
Gallimard says it is not closing Le Divan, just moving it to the 15th district — home of late 20th century intellectuals which cannot afford flats in Saint-Germain-des-Prés.



Tourists fill the cafes of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, once the haunt of figures such as Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre. Property prices have driven out today's intelligentsia

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Silence is golden for Gallic press

Paul Webster in Paris
FRENCH MPs began to back down yesterday from a confrontation with journalists over tax reforms after newspapers threatened to stop reporting parliament if their perks were taken away.

Rightwing MPs lodged an amendment to the Gaullist government's proposal to do away with a 30 per cent special deduction on journalists' declared earnings.

Journalists' unions, backed by newspaper owners, have called for a national strike on Tuesday when the budget measure is discussed, but support for the amendment among government deputies is so overwhelming that it is expected to be carried easily.

There has long been a suspicion that the journalists' perk contributes to complacency about reporting on corruption or the illegal activities of MPs.

Nato treads fine line in Baltics

John Henley in Helsinki on three small republics upsetting Europe's security map
FOR nearly eight centuries, foreign armies have tramped over the three Baltic states. Now, five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union finally gave them their independence, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are once more a growing focus of superpower tension.

As Nato seeks to expand eastward, diplomats fear that these three small republics, a battleground throughout history, could again cause problems far beyond their borders.

"If mishandled, the Baltic issue has the potential to derail Nato enlargement, redraw the security map in north-eastern Europe and provoke a crisis between the West and Russia," the Rand Corporation, the influential American research institute, said earlier this year.

Nonetheless, some Western diplomats in the Baltics remain sceptical. "It's nonsense from St Louis really prepared to die defending Daugavpils [in eastern Latvia]," asked one official.



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Jonathan Steele in Khinjan uncovers a united front against Afghanistan's dominant militia which splits the country on ethnic lines

Taliban's warlord rivals cement secret alliance



A widow takes her children home through the ruins of their deserted neighbourhood in Kabul PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MOORE

THE Taliban militia, on a crusade to restrict women's rights and establish the world's harsh Islamic regime, suffered a potential setback yesterday when Afghanistans' two leading warlords formed a powerful military and political alliance against them.

General Rashid Dostam, the Uzbek militia leader, and Ahmed Shah Massoud, the Tajik former defence minister, met in an old Russian guesthouse on the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush. They shook hands at the beginning, hugged each other at the end and in the intervening 90 minutes agreed to issue an ultimatum to the Taliban to sue for peace or face a united military front.

Gen Dostam and Commander Massoud had not met in the three years since, in one of the country's many shifts in power, the general walked out of the mullahs' Islamic government in Kabul and turned his guns on it.

A helicopter clattered into Khinjan shortly before 3pm, bringing Cmdr Massoud from his headquarters in the Panjshir valley. Gen Dostam had arrived earlier in an armoured Cadillac. He then took a four-wheel drive vehicle to the Salang pass to inspect his forces, who control the strategic tunnel through the Hindu Kush mountain range.

They warned the Taliban that they would jointly resist anyone who continues to fight against one of the signatories of this statement.

The sudden change of atmosphere led to an emergency meeting of staff from the United Nations and other international aid agencies in Kabul. The Taliban had detained and beaten a worker of the International Committee of the Red Cross on Wednesday night.

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The alliance could unravel those whose invincibility seemed unchallengeable

Another nail in LA's coffin

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES is doomed to die of drought, if an earthquake doesn't end it first.

States and city water officials, worried by the findings, are holding talks with Dr Stine to develop such a plan.

has been a useful tool to politicians and businessmen alike. In the early days of migration from the eastern states, newcomers were tempted by crooked estate agents who lauded LA's "Mediterranean" weather.

Hired mouths lend spin to screen showdown

Jonathan Freedland in St Petersburg, Florida

THE spin cycle has taken another turn as the moulders of American public opinion have discovered a sophisticated new technique to advance their cause: the placard.

one journalist to talk to their hired mouth. There were few takers for the former presidential candidate Lamar Alexander's line to the hapless Dan Quayle in 1988, and the unforgettable "Who am I? What am I doing here?" from James Stockdale, the running mate to the Texas billionaire Ross Perot in 1992.

Niagara Falls. The trouble, said Mr Gore, is that the Dole-Kemp plan "would put the American economy in a barrel and send it over the falls".

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The Guardian

Carbon dioxide researchers put ocean in bloom with iron filings

Tim Radford Science Editor

BIOLGISTS tracing how much carbon dioxide goes into the sea have made the oceans bloom — by giving it iron.

Fingerless skeleton may stay to haunt Salinas

Phil Gannon in Mexico City

A SKELETON found buried on property owned by Raúl Salinas, the brother of the former Mexican president, could belong to a key figure implicated in the September 1994 murder of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, general secretary of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, the country's attorney-general said.

The gunman, Daniel Aguilar Treviño, was arrested at the scene and is serving a 50-year jail sentence.

News in brief

Arafat warns of renewed intifada

THE Palestinian Authority president, Yasser Arafat, said yesterday that his negotiators had achieved nothing in their crisis talks with Israel.

Bildt opposes Bosnia pull-out

THE international mediator Carl Bildt called yesterday for foreign peacekeeping troops to stay in Bosnia until 1998 to give the country a chance to recover from war.

Serbia to take back refugees

SERB-DOMINATED Yugoslavia agreed to repatriate 135,000 refugees living illegally in Germany in a treaty signed yesterday, promising they would not face discrimination at home.

Yeltsin squeezes officials

RUSSIA'S president, Boris Yeltsin, yesterday ordered all government officials to declare their income, in a high-profile effort to fill the federal budget's empty coffers.

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United at Bournemouth

The trouble is the voters simply don't believe it

IT IS fashionable among observers at this year's Conservative Party conference at Bournemouth to say that the Tories have had a surprisingly good week. And so, up to a point, they have. From the point of view of party management, the conference, which ends this lunchtime, has undoubtedly gone well. The proximity of the election has meant that there have been no open displays of dissent in the hall of the kind which marked conferences earlier in this parliament. Senior figures in the party have spoken more or less as one. A high-level Cabinet operation to support Kenneth Clarke's position and to maintain the April 1996 Cabinet agreement on policy towards the single currency has been impressively and effectively driven through the week's proceedings; the work begun by Malcolm Rifkind on Wednesday was carried further yesterday, not just by Mr Clarke and Michael Heseltine but also, significantly, by Michael Portillo. This conference will have disappointed those who were looking for the Conservative Party to collapse into internecine madness.

There was also, in John Major's question-and-answer session on Wednesday morning, a reminder that the Tory leader has instincts and abilities to which people genuinely respond and which constitute a genuine threat to Labour Party confidence. Mr Major was immensely effective on Wednesday, though his achievement has to be seen in its context and not overhyped. He won over an audience which wanted to support him, and he did it by articulating an absolutely realistic tactical opposition to Eurosceptic demands with an authority which many in that hall, accustomed to hearing only anti-European rants and to reading only anti-European newspapers, can rarely, if ever, have heard before. It was possible, in the hall, actually to feel Mr Major winning the argument and enhancing

his position. He had come to Bournemouth in low esteem among his enemies, and even his supporters, amid speculation that he might yet be forced to commit himself to a more Eurosceptic position on the single currency. He leaves Bournemouth more respected and more secure in his leadership even than last year (when he had recently defeated John Redwood's challenge). That security is strictly temporary, until the election, and contains an implicit assumption that he will no longer be leader in 12 months' time, but even this is a luxury he has not enjoyed often, and it gives him greater authority as the seven-month campaign begins in earnest.

However, it is one thing for a party to persuade itself to be united, and quite another for the country to notice it or to appreciate the fact. The Tory party has a natural impulse towards electoral survival and a belief in its entitlement to govern, and there is a widespread, if belated, recognition that it now faces a Labour Party which seeks its objectives with, as Mr Heseltine put it yesterday, steely discipline. There are therefore two crucial questions to ask about the Tory Party at the end of this conference. First, has it achieved anything more positive this week in the way of collective vision and fresh thinking? The answer to that is no. There have been very few substantive new proposals on show at Bournemouth and, although Mr Major's speech today may spring some surprises, there have been no promises to examine than commitments to act. Second, are the voters likely to change their well-established antipathy to a tired and crumbling government on the basis of a single week's damage limitation exercise, always supposing that it does not quickly fall apart? Nothing is impossible in politics, but the odds remain very firmly against it.

A carelessness with freedom

A privacy law may be inevitable. What an epitaph for an age

WE MAY be approaching a crisis in tabloid journalism. Over the past 10 years the mass-circulation papers owned by Rupert Murdoch and Mirror Group Newspapers have redefined their role so as to have less and less to do with news and more and more to do with entertainment. If they restricted themselves to resurrecting Elvis or discovering Routemaster buses on the moon, no-one would mind very much. As it is, they find their entertainment in exposing the human frailties of almost anyone who is in the public eye, and quite a few who aren't.

This has little to do with journalism as it was understood by the tabloid editors of a previous generation, let alone a Cuddip or a Christiansen. Yet liberals continue to mumble platitudes about freedom of the press, as though those who fought for such freedoms through the centuries would have hailed the right to expose the marital infidelity of a TV weather man, the private confessions of the Duchess of York or this week's wildly mistaken peephole voyeurism by the Sun.

No self-respecting journalist in the country would offer a serious public interest defence to half the excesses now perpetrated on an almost daily basis by editors working for two proprietors. There is no defence to many of the stories. In a word, they stink. They give ammunition to the enemies of press freedom, help restrict open public debate and generally debase the culture.

So Lord Wakeham is right once more

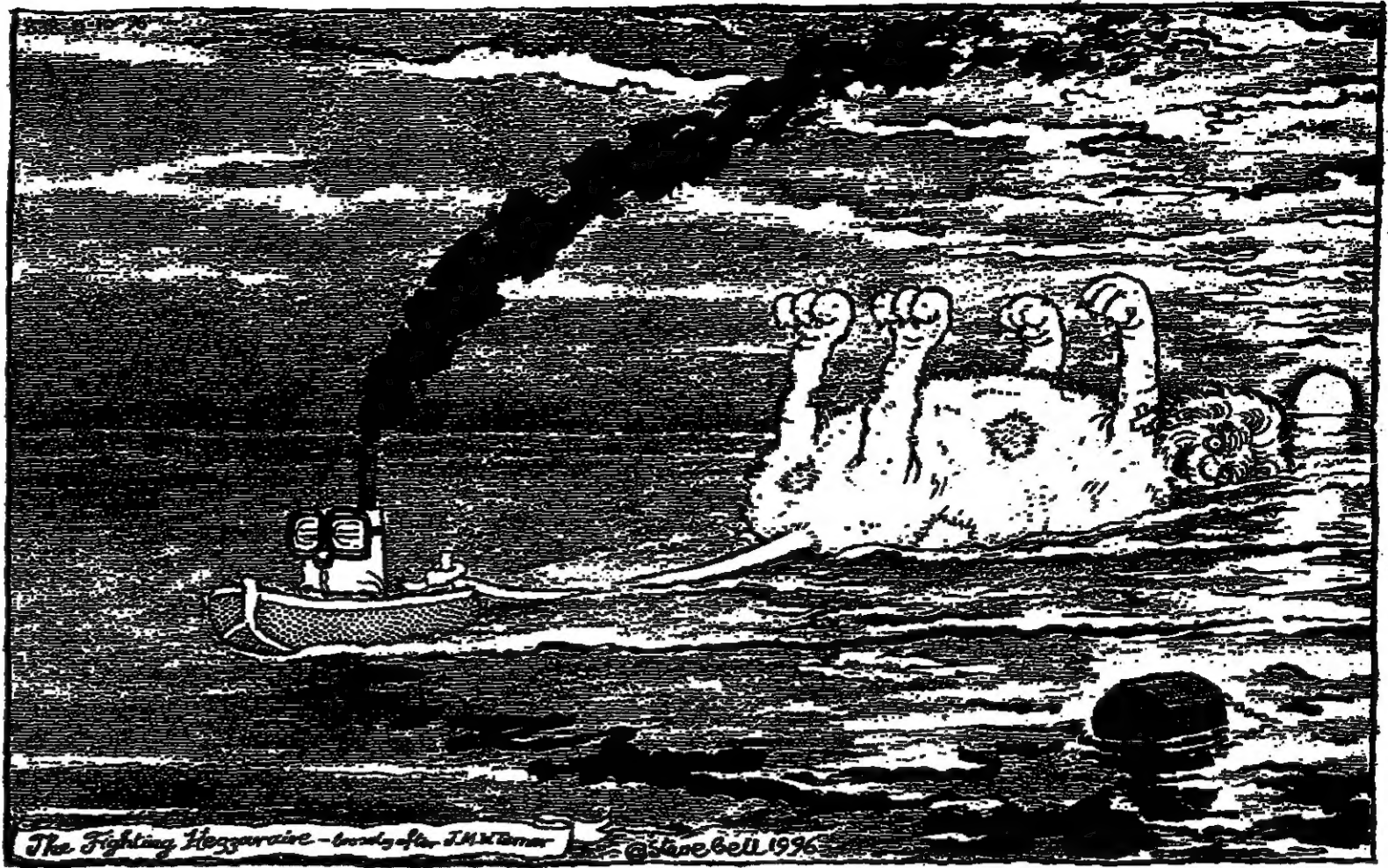
John Major's conference diary

In which he reflects on shirt sleeves and difficult questions

TO BORROW a phrase from my footballing friends, I am in no small measure over the moon. Wednesday turned out to be a historic day, after my "shirtsleeves" Q & A session was acclaimed, as Dr Brian Mahwinney had predicted, as a "bravura" performance. As one was said afterwards, so much for the old, stuffed-shirt image (a joke which would have had the Conference rocking with laughter, if only I had thought of it earlier). Am I the first party leader to address a conference in shirtsleeves? I'm glad you asked me that, because the answer is a resounding yes. I always say there are two sorts of politicians: those who keep their jackets on — with all the unpleasant discomfort and awful artificiality involved — and those, like me, who prefer to discard them entirely, relax and share a quiet joke with friends. As I said to Brian afterwards, can you picture Mrs Thatcher in shirtsleeves? Or

John Redwood? Not to mention our good friend Mr Tony Blair! We both roared.

But trust the Labour Party to claim that Tony Blair was the first to take his jacket off. As usual, they are not fooling anyone. And anyway, even if Tony Blair has been taking his jacket off for years, it just goes to show how his pampered upbringing leaves him out of touch with most ordinary British people. As a former resident of Brixton, I was 18 before I owned a jacket and, in my family, even shirts were considered a luxury. In his autobiography, my brother Terry has already described how, for many years, we all wore reinforced cotton vests, which we simply stuffed with straw and old newspapers when the nights drew in. Can we rule out a tax on jackets? Now that would be telling, wouldn't it! One last question — can we rule out sleaze? Sorry madam, we're out of time!



Letters to the Editor

A woman's role in the police

WHILE I am sorry that your correspondent (Letters, October 10) had such an unhappy time with her local police force, and understand the pain reported in your article (Inside Story, October 9), I totally reject your letter headline that "the police force is no place for any self-respecting female".

Police work requires confident people who are able, as far as possible, to maintain their humanity, sensitivity and integrity, despite what sometimes happens to them on the streets. We have many impressive women and men who fulfil that achievement.

The problems of harassment are increasingly being recognised and many individual grievances are properly resolved. The police service, like many other organisations, dislikes contested industrial tribunals and counteracting publicity which might be generated by aggrieved individuals. But that does not mean that senior officers are not working to improve things.

Your second correspondent would find many victims of rape who would applaud the sensitivity of the police. Alison Moses, Police Superintendents' Association, 67a Reading Road, Pangbourne, Berkshire RG8 7JD.

And in brief

WILL the Burhill Golf Club (Golf rules handicap adopted on, October 8) also disqualify from family tournaments the 30 per cent of children who are not the sons and daughters of their mothers' husbands? Not to mention those who result from artificial insemination by donor. As the mother of two adopted children I am well aware of prejudice against adoption and adopted children, but rarely is it so blatant. Name and address supplied.

IT is strange that the Sun apologises to Princess Diana and James Hewitt only when it is revealed that the video pictures it published are a hoax. This implies that, were the film genuine, it would have no such qualms — in the public interest, of course.

Adrian Bending, 231 Elgin Avenue, London W9 1NH.

JAMES Beaman (Letters, October 10) believes a preference for tonal music is "in-built" because "our hearing mechanism selected these harmonies". If this were so, tonal music would be as universal as colour perception. But it's not. Tonality was developed by Western Europe at the Renaissance and is not used by other musical forms — in Chinese music, for example. This appeal to a hearing mechanism as "ours" invites "Tonto's" reply: "Who's this 'we', palface?"

Anthony Eschtoppe, 27 Victoria Avenue, Manchester M20 2GX.

The unwelcome traveller

ROBERT Jones MP (Letters, October 9) suggests that the recent European Court decision against June Buckley affirms that gypsies have the same rights under the planning process as anyone else.

In reality, however, we must be aware that the granting of planning permission is a highly subjective process. In the run-up to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, the Department of the Environment issued circulars suggesting planning permission for travellers should be encouraged. At the time, this encouragement was touted as a solution to welfare concerns arising from the strong measures contained within the Act. However, since the Act, planning permission for travellers has been a rarely achieved phenomenon.

Particularly poignant examples of this are two attempted settlements in Somerset at Kingshill and Pinthe Bubble. The DoE inspectors sent to report on these planning cases conducted extensive local inquiries. They both recommended that temporary planning permission should be granted for a trial period. However, in both cases, the Environment Secretary John Gummer overruled his own inspectors and insisted that planning permission should

be refused outright. To suggest that travellers have the same planning access as anyone else is like suggesting we all have the same political access as the likes of Ian Greer. Jim Carey, 1a Waterloo Road, London N19 5EW.

THE letter from Robert Jones MP fails to acknowledge the harsh realities created in particular by the 1994 CJPO Act. Not only was the duty of local authorities to provide adequate sites for gypsies abolished, but the Act at the same time gave new powers to the police and local authorities to direct the removal of caravans from unauthorised sites, and created several new criminal offences aimed at gypsies who continue to camp on land without permission.

The Government chose to ignore warnings during debates on the 1994 Bill in the Lords that such discriminatory treatment of gypsies would breach international law. The recent judgment of the European Court of Human Rights did not decide this question, but there are many cases following which will do so. Philip Leach, Legal Officer, Liberty, 21 Tabard Street, London SE1 4LA.

THE environment minister's letter is selective in its use of facts but conceals the truth. To take only his points on private sites. True, the powers of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act cannot be used against gypsies on their own land without planning permission.

Instead, the Town and Country Planning Act is used with fines of up to £20,000. Under this legislation gypsies have had their mobile homes broken up by local councils and made to foot the bill. The number of caravans on private sites is growing each year but at the very slow rate of just over 100 per year — 117 in the 12 months from January 1995. At this rate, it would take 26 years for the nearly 3,000 families still on the roadside to get a pitch, assuming they could raise the money to buy land and go through all the hoops of the planning process.

The Government's own circular 1/94, by saying gypsy sites should not be either near existing housing or in the open countryside, makes it almost impossible to find land which will get planning permission, which is why 90 per cent of applications fail. (Dr) Donald Kenrick, Romany Guild, 61 Blenheim Crescent, London W11 2EG.

Lambeth ways

THE continuing claims by Lambeth that it inherited Enborne Lodge School is not true (£650,000 for empty school, October 9). In the transfer from Iles in 1990, the school was allocated to Westminster. However, a Lambeth Labour councillor, who is guardian of a boy at the school, persuaded the controlling Labour group to secure the school for Lambeth. It is perfidious that, within a year, the council was seeking to close the school.

It is also quite untrue for Lambeth to claim that it cannot afford the school or that it costs it money. The entire cost is recovered from boroughs with boys at the school. Over the past five years, Lambeth has received an excess of income over expenditure in respect of the school amounting to as much as £150,000 per year. Tony Freke, Chair of Governors, Enborne Lodge School, Enborne Street, Wash Common, Newbury, Berks RG14 6RL.

A Country Diary

GLoucestershire: The apple tree which stands close to the northern hedge of our garden is probably no more than 30 years old. It is a cooking apple of an unknown provenance, though the estimable Mr Bracher, our hay supplier, tells me that he believes it to be a variety developed on the Berkeley estate in the last century. He's probably right because I do see other specimens in the locality. Whatever its culinary virtues, which go from simple work-a-day apple desserts up to the gastronomic elegance of apple baklava, it is not quite up to the standard set by the Bramley, the sharp acidity of which, combined with its keeping qualities, make it the winner in its class. The age of the tree also ensures that, even with some fairly structural pruning in its earlier life, it remains a large standard in form and I find myself, as I contemplate the crop, wondering about the Bramleys, on dwarf rooting stock, that I planted in our last garden in the Scottish

Frank v Barbara: the final round

BARBARA Castle (Letters, October 7) accuses me of failing to produce the costs of the welfare reforms I have been advocating. At the Guardian fringe meeting during the Labour Party conference in Blackpool, I told her that the costs, which have been undertaken by the Government Actuary's Department, will be published next week.

In the meantime, Barbara might like to publish corrections to her own figures. She has misinterpreted the National Insurance fund contributions and included the sum that goes towards the National Health Service as money being available to finance her reforms. The problem is that Barbara has not changed her ideas despite the massive change in circumstances. She is trying to persuade the Labour Party to adopt a pension scheme that Tory governments have savaged not once, but twice. Surely she won the argument that guarantee could she give that a future Tory government would not behave in exactly the same way and have the value of Serps pensions? Frank Field MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

MANY will sympathise with Barbara Castle's condemnation of the Government's neglect of pensioners. Unfortunately, the sad political reality is that few taxpayers would be prepared to subsidise the elderly through higher taxes. The only viable long-term solution is to introduce legislation that requires every citizen of working age to make regular, monthly contributions to their own pension through the private sector with means-testing assistance for the less well-off. With a shrinking workforce, an ageing population, and an overburdened welfare state, this will become a necessary evil. Richard C R Steel, 17 Montpellier Terrace, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 1UX.

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We may edit them: shorter ones are more likely to appear.



The emperor has no clothes

WHEN Francis Fukuyama suggested that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the "end of history", he sparked a major debate. Now you expect us to take seriously the pronouncements of one Giorgio Armani about the "end of fashion" (Top designers go to war, September 12).

We get daily news from the fashion front about people whose views are inconsequential about events which have as much relevance to our lives as the movement of the spheres. The opposition between Armani and Versace is treated as though it reflects a profound cultural disjunction, when in effect it is about how a few people, with more money than taste, will wear one look rather than another.

The world of high fashion is irredeemably tedious and irrelevant. Nor does the fact that British designers are at the cutting edge fill me with pride. Emma Grant, 165 Russell Road, Birmingham B13 8RR.

Jim Madge, Brock Lane, Woodgreen.

Numbers go up, pants come down

SINCE New Labour policy is to be dictated by opinion polls and focus groups, I trust the fact that 75 per cent of respondents are against public money being used to fund political parties will lead to an immediate condemnation of the idea by Tony Blair. Edward Greening, 26 Garden Street, London E1.

YOUR leader (A Labour landslide, October 8) is over-optimistic. People do lie to opinion polls: they did so hugely in 1992. 3 Pippin Court, Vauxhall Grove, London SW8 1TB.

Jimmy Carter started attracting votes for the US presidency because he took his jacket off and looked relaxed. Heaven forbid that things should get worse for John Major (Relaxed PM comes up with the right answers, October 10) or he might be seeing more of his underpants, and not in Steve Bell's cartoons. Brian Bethell, 3 Cherry Drive.

0171 837 4530

Diary
Matthew Norman

An intriguing letter, dated January 31 1994, has reached the Diary. It is a reply from Sir Alastair Morton, chairman of debt-ridden Eurotunnel, to that great writer of letters, Neil Hamilton. The MP had been in touch on behalf of a constituent, a Mr. Halsett, whose firm, Thermedics, had failed to win a tender to detect explosives in the Channel Tunnel. "In it," writes Sir Alastair of an earlier missive from Mr. Halsett, "he made the very offensive suggestion that the decision to purchase the competitor's equipment had previously been made in France. This is Bullshit." Ignoring that rogue capital "B" which comes to the final paragraph, "I would like to suggest to you that Mr Halsett should not try to wrangle his MP with his left hand," writes Sir Alastair, "while pursuing new business in a normal fashion with his right." It's an enchantingly elegant insult, and I wonder what the hell does it mean? "This is a private letter," says a Eurotunnel spokesman, at least confirming its genuineness. "And therefore we can make no comment on it." Ah well.

MEANWHILE, Mr Hamilton also figures in the Spectator rambles of the Cypriot writer Taki George ("The domestic with the Demestica," as the side of the Ford Transit puts it). T-G empathises with the disgraced MP, he says, having also once thrown in the towel: he surrendered to Mohammed Al-Fayed, on the grounds that he was "a coke-sniffer", the Egyptian had uttered the simple truth. To his credit, however, T-G applauds the Guardian for what he quotes as being "the biggest victory of any left-of-centre newspaper against a Conservative government for a long time". For that expression of solidarity, we thank him warmly.

THANKS also to those who have pointed out, somewhat gleefully, that yesterday's item about the gerbil was not wildly original. Apparently, the story appeared in Private Eye three years ago. It also appeared in Private Eye eight years ago. On the "five-year rule", it will reappear in Private Eye in two years' time. Its next scheduled appearance in the Diary is May 17, 1999.

IN a rapid-rebuttal counterstrike, Max Clifford has denied Oofy Wegg-Prosser's claim that he has long been a party member. "All Oofy I've always been a supporter, but never a member," says Max, who will address Mitcham and Morden Labour Party on Monday. "I'm sorry I didn't get back to you sooner," he adds, "but I was out with Mandy... no, not Mandy Mandelson, Mandy Allwood. I haven't met Mandy Mandelson yet." Max continues, "but I'm looking forward to it. I'm sure there's a thing or two we can teach each other..."

OVERHEARD, en route to making his conference speech, was Environment Secretary, Little Gumb Gum. "Remind me of the names of my ministerial team," said Gumb Gum to an aide. "I'm afraid I tend to forget them."

IN the Daily Telegraph, Boris "the Jackal" Johnson appraises John Major's shirt-sleeve chat. It was, he says, "a triumph... they chorused and stamped and cheered the new secret weapon". If some people think that the article might have ended with a line reading "Boris 'the Jackal' Johnson is the Tory candidate in Cwyd South", well, who cares? There will always be tire-some cynics. Meanwhile, there was some concern at Canary Wharf yesterday about the Jackal's whereabouts. "Call back in an hour," said a spokesman. "We'll have a clearer idea when the search party returns from the PM's colon."

A BURGLAR, who broke into an unoccupied house in London, has died. The reason for the house's desertion, so the Forfean Times reports, was that it was being fumigated, and the man was fatally overcome by the chemicals.



Mr Smith goes to Westminster

Commentary
Peter Preston

THE Third Man was called Mr Smith: a name that doesn't exactly resound in the memory, a name with mass anonymity attached. So why do I keep remembering him? Not just when the Neil Hamilton files are open on the table, but when Michael Howard is getting his Bournemouth TV stander for the latest round of Home Office redistribution. Tough on transgressors, tough on the causes of transgression. Two strikes and you're out. One strike and your driving licence is gone. Back — across the mists of time — to the kinder, gentler world of Mr Smith. Tim Smith, the Conservative MP for Beconsfield, was a junior Northern Ireland Office minister in October 1994 when the Guardian first published its detailed story about cash, questions and

sundry matters. Mr Hamilton and Mr Ian Greer issued libel writs. Mr Smith resigned from HMG. He had in fact told the Prime Minister, "raised some of [Mohamed Al-Fayed's] concerns in Parliamentary Questions and in an adjournment debate. Mr Al-Fayed paid me fees. I ended this relationship with him in 1989. Shortly before then, I made an appropriate entry in the Register of Members' Interests." But that, he admitted frankly, was too little, too late. "I realise these circumstances may be misinterpreted to the damage of both myself and the Government. I offer you my profound apologies."

John Major benignly "repeated this necessity" and "was duly grateful for your clear and full explanation" — but "nonetheless, what you did was clearly wrong, and in these circumstances I accept your resignation". Exit, Mr Smith. And, because others chose not to exit, little was heard of him again. Indeed, had the Hamilton/Greer libel case gone ahead last week, stretching up-bench and down-bench for a month or so, the world "Smith" might never have troubled a passing juror. Tim Smith, as his own barrister

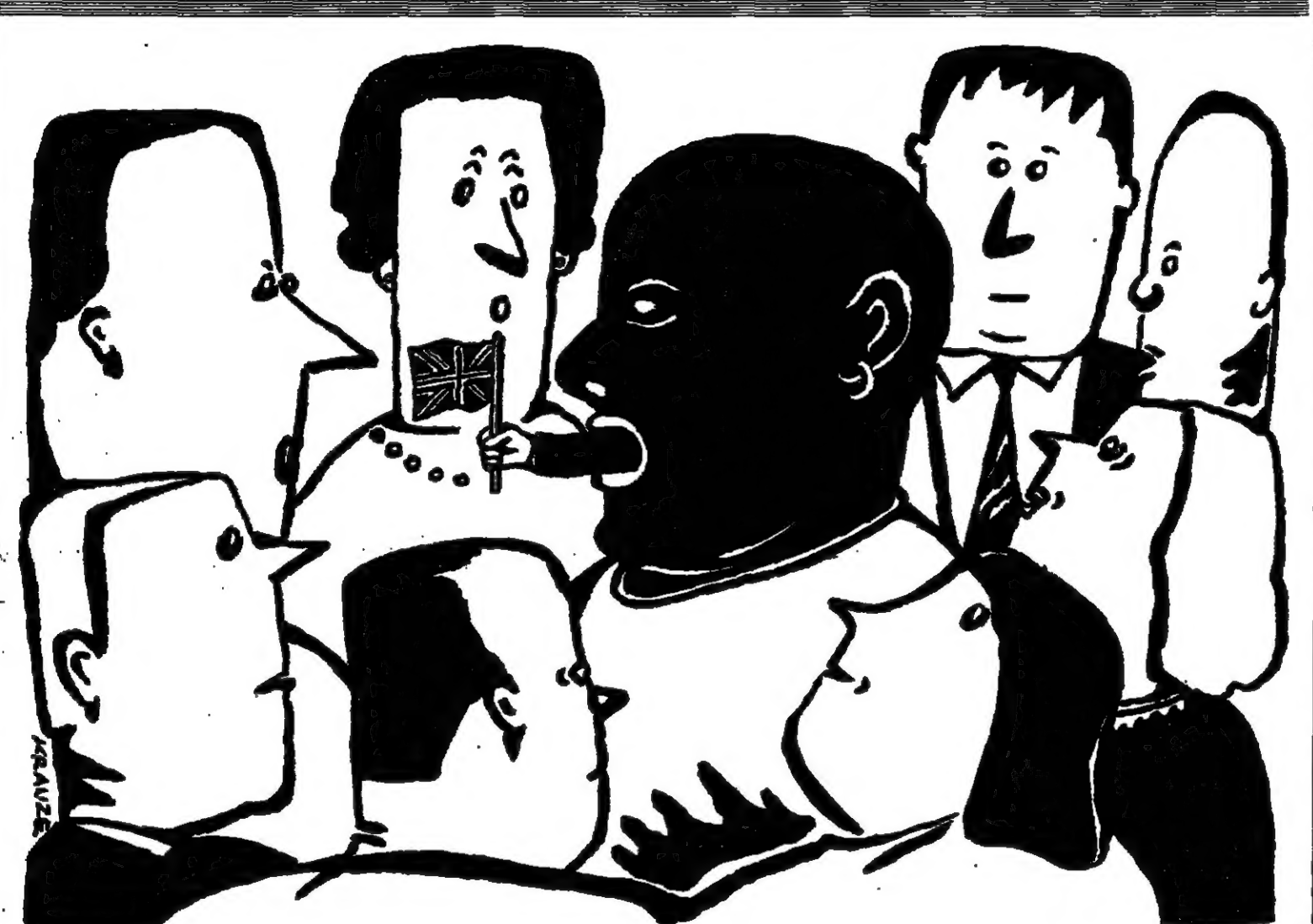
ties through open pamphleteering. There is the baffling episode of July 1993, when David Hencke and John Mullin of The Guardian first approached him and asked whether he had been putting down paid questions on Mr Al-Fayed's behalf. He said: "That is not true." He volunteered only that Harrods had given a couple of teddy bears, which he had declared on the register. And — perhaps most inscrutable of all — there is the perplexity of what Mr Smith told Mr Major and what Ian Greer Associates told the press on the same day, October 29, 1994. Tim Smith (to repeat) said "Mr Al-Fayed paid me fees." An IGA statement (to the Financial Times) said: "Mr Smith was paid as a consultant, which involved him asking questions on our behalf. That is

Exit, Mr Smith. And, because others chose not to exit, little was heard of him again

very far from being paid to ask questions." Here's the profound dislocation. Tim Smith quit. But was he on the Al-Fayed books or the Greer books for payment purposes? Does the IGA ledger make any reference to the money that changed hands? If it does, why on earth didn't Mr Smith say so at the time? If it doesn't, then the implication is starkly different: he was recruited and fielded for Harrods by Ian Greer, but

paid direct by Mohamed Al-Fayed (as Harrods in fact claims). Mr Smith, as his lawyers' claims confirm, obviously wants none of these blasts from the past raised again in polite society. He did something "clearly wrong": he departed in a convenient instant with no thought of any subsequent investigation. The sacred Privileges Committee did nothing. The House of Commons was predictably supportive in its clubby, sympathetic way. Within a few months Tim Smith was back as a nominated member of the Northern Ireland Select Committee. Last year he became a member of the Public Accounts Committee, Westminster's most hallowed watchdog of financial efficiency — the driving license (if you will) of Whitehall financial probity. Some say he may one day be its chairman.

In a better, sweeter world (the world not according to Michael Howard) that might be a small tale of rectitude and redemption. But, alas, we'll be talking different planets when Westminster returns next week. Whatever the law might or might not say, Tim Smith exists. He was the third man when Ian Greer offered his services to Mohamed Al-Fayed, a part of the team as duly provided. And he was paid. Who did that? How was it done? Can we know a little more about something so "clearly wrong"? After 28 strikes, Mr Smith is not merely not out, but rebuilding a career. Good for him: but only a touch more co-operation and explanation will draw the line beneath events that he, and his party, so edgily crave.



Gary Younge, a Guardian reporter who has just completed a three-month fellowship at the Washington Post contrasts the black experience in Washington and London

Who do I think I am?

BEFORE I came to America from England, three months ago, I asked an American journalist in London what kind of reactions to expect. "Well, when they hear an English accent Americans usually add about 20 points to your IQ. But when they see a black face they usually don't," he said. "You'll be an anomaly."

Recalling that the authors of The Bell Curve had claimed that black people have an IQ 15 points lower than whites, I was heartened to think that even in the eyes of the most hardened racist I would still come out at least five points ahead.

After three months in Washington, I am left wondering whether "anomaly" quite covers the mixture of bemusement, amazement and curiosity I have encountered since I arrived. Often people just think I am showing off. This is especially the case with African-Americans. All I have to do is open my mouth and they prime themselves to ask: "Who are you trying to impress with that accent?" They don't actually say anything. Their thoughts are revealed in the downward trajectory of the eyebrows and the curl of the lip.

Once I say I'm English, the eyebrows go back up and the lips uncurl. Now they are in shock. At times I have had to give the people a couple of minutes to compose themselves. "I had no idea," said a white woman near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in a tone my grandmother might use if I came out as a cross-dresser. Then there was the woman

colleagues over to hear my accent. "Listen to this, listen to this," she said, "say something," she demanded, as if I was a circus marmoset. Most people here who have not travelled much abroad seem astounded to learn that black people exist outside America and Africa. Their image of England is what they see on television (Fawcety Towers, Upstairs Downstairs) and what they read in the papers (Princes Di, mad cow disease). Whether that is the image that England wants to sell or the one that America wants to buy is not quite clear — my guess is that it's a mixture of both — but either way it doesn't leave much room for black people.

Questions like 'Where are you from?' often mean 'Please tell me you are not from here'

Once I have told someone I am English they are generally prepared to let me at my word, which is more than can be said about people I meet back home. A typical conversation goes something like this: "Where are you from?" "London." "Well where were you born?" "London." "Well, before then?" "There was no before then!" "Well, where are your parents from?"

"Oh, so you're from Barbados." "No, I'm from London." "My parents came to England — where I was born — from Barbados in the early 1960s. Like many immigrants, they planned to stay for only a few years, work hard, earn some money and then return home. But like many immigrants, they ended up staying, starting a family and building a life. Blacks now make up about 3 per cent of the British population." Britain's sense of national identity is still trying to catch up. But in the meantime, questions like "Where are you from?" are often interpreted to mean, "Please tell me you are not from here."

Which is why meeting so many Americans with names like Gagliotta, Biskupic and Shapiro is so refreshing. Almost everybody in the US is else. Even the white people. And most people lay claim to another identity — Italian-American, Irish-American, Hungarian-American — which qualifies their American identity but does not necessarily undermine it. Black Briton does not come with a hyphen. These are two separate words, relating to two very distinct and often conflicting identities. If black people in Britain define themselves as British at all — I was 17 before I would admit it publicly — then they will usually put "black" in front of it to show that they do not see themselves as fully British and are not always accepted as British.

At the annual convention for the Advancement of Coloured People in Charlotte, North Carolina, there seemed to be only three higher authorities to which the speakers called upon — God, the Constitution and the American flag. The NAACP may represent the "old school" of African-American politics, but throughout my time in the States I have met no African-American who does not place some faith in these common reference points. Britain, in contrast, has no written constitution, is far less religious, and you would not get a Union Jack within five miles of a political meeting full of black people, regardless of how moderate the organisation may be. This may change in time.

A foot carefully placed in the avocado dip



Bel Littlejohn

SUFFER? Of course I do, but not for so much now as when I was a teenager, reading the early novels of Margaret Drabble. In many ways, Drabble taught a whole generation of women how to feel, and, more crucially, how to feel depressed. There's an unforgettable scene in one of her middle period novels, I forget which. The heroine, Angelica, is contemplating suicide while preparing an avocado dip for a theme dinner party for close friends that evening. The theme is misery. It's the 1970s, so when the guests turn up they're all bankrupt and very sad. By 9pm, the avocado dip is exhausted. They all are. For two pages, one says anything whilst the author homes in on the pattern of the tablecloth — a depressing mixture of interlocking triangles, in many ways just like life. To break the silence, the heroine's friend Paul, a psychiatrist, mentions it's raining outside. Next to him, Sally, a polytechnic lecturer, takes the news badly and has a breakdown. Sally's ex-husband, Phil, blames Paul for mentioning the rain. "How could you be so callous?" he asks. "Chicken Cooked in a Brick with Rosemary, anyone?" asks Angelica, struggling to wipe away the accumulated tears of two failed marriages. Teddy, the failed merchant banker, bursts into a fit of near-hysterical weeping. Angelica blames herself for forgetting that Teddy's first wife was called Rosemary. Rosemary left Teddy for Phil, who had already left Sally after that fling with Paul. To alleviate the tension, Angelica turns on the radio. News comes through of the miners' strike, a major earthquake and two or three plane crashes. "And it's still only 1974," thinks Sally. "We've got another six years to go until the eighties — and who's to say they'll be any better?" She opens the oven and takes out the lemon soufflé. Storm clouds hover over it.

Powerful stuff, and, as ever with Drabble, it captured the mood of the nation at that time. A lot of people were crying into their avocado dips that decade. So I await her very latest novel with the keenest anticipation. But — whoah, Bel! — the subject of today's column is not Margaret Drabble, novelist. It is in fact Margaret Drabble, younger sister of A S Byatt. And my message to them is this: a great big hug can make all the difference, believe me. I think I was one of the first to notice the onset of their sibling rivalry. It was at a book-reading at the Hay-on-Wye Literary Festival back in 1983. Margaret was reading a beautifully sensitive passage from her seminal novel about the sixties, Choking to Death. She had just got to the crucial bit where Hermione asks Gladwyn exactly what Celia thinks of Patricia's affair with Marcus, and in particular how it will affect James and the kids. The lecture theatre was hushed in expectation. Suddenly — SCRUNCH SCRUNCH SCRUNCH — all eyes turned to the back, where Antonia Byatt — SCRUNCH SCRUNCH SCRUNCH — was tucking into a king-sized packet of Golden Wonder crisps. By the time Antonia had got to the bottom of the packet, James had run off with Gladwyn. Celia had hully burred in the centre. Hermione had departed with Patricia to find herself in India. Of course, it may have been pure bad luck. Even Susan Sontag sometimes enjoys a packet of cheese and onion. But just two months later, I was to experience another intimation of this sibling rivalry. Antonia Byatt had come to read from her novel-in-progress before an invited audience for a special edition of The South Bank Show. In suitably hushed tones, Melvyn introduced her as one of the finest English novelists of her generation. She came on to much applause in a free-flowing cerise dress and headed for an armchair carefully positioned in the centre of the station. With impeccable dignity, she sat down, but then — PHWAAAAA — ARRRRRPPPI — the most embarrassing of all noises emerged from her seat, followed by unashamed giggles from the back row.

A FULL investigation by The South Bank Show security staff unearthed a used whoopee cushion secreted upon the chair some minutes before. Their perpetrator was revealed as none other than the speaker's sister, Ms Drabble. Similar incidents followed. In 1992, as Byatt walked to the platform at Guildhall to collect her Booker Prize, the Late Show cameras caught the nervous fidgeting of a "Black Man" placard taped to her back, the tall-tale flourish of the "E" suggesting Drabble up to her old tricks again. And the last time I saw Margaret, reading from her latest novel at the Lyttelton Theatre, I was surprised when a grand piano fell headlong from the roof, landing within inches of her feet. Five minutes later, Antonia Byatt was seen in the theatre restaurant ordering a three-course dinner with jelly to follow, a pair of sharp scissors glinting in her breast pocket.



SHE HAS NOWHERE LEFT TO TURN. PLEASE DON'T TURN THE PAGE

You could be Teering's last hope. She has little or no food to eat, and lives in a tiny, insanitary mud shack. Without help soon she could die. Yet by sponsoring an elderly person like Teering for just \$10 a month, you could provide the food, clothing and medicines they need to survive. In return, you'll receive regular reports on your adopted grandparent. For more details, please complete the form below.

Yes, I'm interested in helping an elderly person overseas. Please send me details. Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms Address Postcode Tel. No. Return to: Helen Higgs, Adopt a Granny, Help the Aged, FINEPOST, London E9 1B 1JY. Or phone 0171 235 0255. Help the Aged Adopt a Granny! Registered Charity No. 272762

Sir Nigel Fisher

Loyal to the House



Sir Nigel Fisher... strong support for the Commonwealth

There was disappointment in the career of Nigel Fisher, who has died aged 83, not least when he learnt on good authority that his name had been struck by the Prime Minister...

In 1959 and 1961. When Macleod became party chairman in 1961, he included Fisher on the chairman's committee...

Having made what he thought would be his final speech in the House in July 1964, he realised overnight that he could not bear to give up politics and next day, backed by his wife, the formidable Patsie, he went to Sandys...

He realised overnight that he could not bear to give up politics - and his posting to Kenya was rescinded

Fisher was the son of a Royal Navy officer Sir Thomas Fisher, and the stepson of Sir Geoffrey Shakespeare, who married Fisher's widow in 1926. Shakespeare had been Lloyd George's secretary and first as a Liberal and then as a National Liberal MP...

and showed great moral courage; but Macleod congratulated him on the speech and shortly afterwards, in July 1962, Fisher found himself in government as parliamentary under secretary at the Colonial Office...

He published his war and times vivid study of Iain Macleod in 1973, and both his advance and royalties were given with typical generosity to Eve Macleod...

His continued liberalism, notably over white Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence, lost him the vice-chairmanship of the Conservative-backed Commonwealth Immigrants Committee...

Fisher lost his wife last year. He was a man of courage, wit, and unwavering political principle.

John Barnes

Fisher was one of the last Conservative MPs to have entered politics out of a sense of duty. Amazed that he should have become a junior minister, he flourished as a loyal subordinate to Reginald Maudling and Duncan Sandys...

Udom Patpong

A name in the street of shame

THE neon-lit bars of Bangkok's Patpong Road are one of the world's most notorious centres of sex-for-sale nightlife. They are also the legacy associated with Udom Patpong...

moved out in search of bigger premises or different locations, bars and nightclubs rushed in. Udom always maintained he never sought to bring them or keep them. Contrary to mythology they did not throng off him from the Vietnam war but from the civilian contractors and other foreign businesses lured by the wartime economy...

Like other popular western notions of Thailand, the sobriquet was misplaced. A former London School of Economics student, Udom never owned or managed the bars that reputed to foreigners the fabled Thai sex trade. He was a landowner who developed a near-vacant plot near what is now the city's commercial centre, and grew vastly wealthy as a landlord to the 60-go-go bars and shrived on foreign dollars...

Udom's parents had moved to Thailand from China's Hainan Island and sent him first to Thai schools; he then studied at the LSE from 1956-59 before taking a business studies degree at the University of Minnesota, so that Udom was in the US when war with Japan broke out. The Thai government took a pro-Axis stance but Udom opted for the Free Thai Movement that backed the Allies...

He was among 14 Thais who last year were belatedly awarded their "wings" from the Fort Benning US military academy for wartime parachute jumps during training for projected drops into Thailand as resistance agents; the war ended before they could be undertaken...

Soon after the war, Udom's father Pompat made the investment that was to make his family among the richest in Thailand. For the equivalent of just 2,500 US dollars he bought a house and land on what was then the edge of Bangkok; it now ranks among the real estate gems of the city.

The family decided to build a road linking one major thoroughfare with what at the time was a canal and is now one of the most congested, bank-lined arteries. As Bangkok started its 1950s sprawl, Udom developed Patpong as a business centre, luring many airlines, including the CIA's Air America.

The street's metamorphosis into a sin strip took place in the 1970s. As businesses

Behind the tawdry veneer, Patpong is little more than a couple of rows of modest concrete shophouses and a few office buildings. Yet as the city prospered Patpong found itself in the heart of its prosperous financial and commercial belt, and Udom was quick to keep rents in line with soaring real estate values.

He remained a slight, modest figure. He was fond of his liquor, reputedly followed a time-honoured local tradition of keeping a succession of minor wives and managed every detail of the family business, which included substantial property outside Bangkok.

Whether to soften the hard sex image or merely broaden its tourist appeal, Patpong added a night market in the late 1990s that is thought to pour millions of pounds in rents each month into the family coffers. These kinds of numbers are what has allowed Patpong to endure as the surrounding area started to bristle with gleaming high-rise office blocks and hotels.

But Udom's death will place a question mark over the future of what is one of Bangkok's most priceless pieces of undeveloped real estate. Other family members in past years argued for opening Patpong to the developers.

In the months or years to come, family fingers will be flying over their electronic devices to check how perhaps change the fortune of the street that bears their name.

Nick Cunningham-Broce

Udom Patpong, property developer, born December 16, 1916; died September 30, 1996

Ludmilla Chiriaeff

Leading life's drama a merry dance



Ludmilla Chiriaeff... created her own mythology

LUDMILLA Chiriaeff, the Canadian dancer, choreographer and ballet director, who has died aged 72, lived her life as a great, evolving drama. She transformed the facts of her Russian background and struggles to establish a ballet company in Montreal into a personal mythology - epic in scale, poetic in content and tinged with the suggestion of impending tragedy.

Chiriaeff was born in Riga, where her Russian parents had temporarily settled after fleeing from the Bolsheviks. She was raised in Berlin but her heritage - aided by a thick Russian accent - became part of her aristocratic mystique. Chiriaeff's grand manner and theatrical elegance gave her an air of exoticism; when she worked for all it was worth. Her parents were well connected, and during Chiriaeff's childhood the great choreographer Michel Fokine was a regular house guest. As Chiriaeff never failed to relate, he became her first and most powerful influence in dance.

She began her professional career with the Berlin Opera Ballet and moved to Switzerland after the second world war, where she opened a school and then formed her own company. By 1962, now

married and with two children, she looked to Canada to provide fresh adventures.

She arrived in Montreal just as Radio-Canada, the French-language division of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, was launching a television service. Chiriaeff was soon costumeing her students in recycled curtains and bedcovers and presenting them on TV as Les Ballets Chiriaeff.

The money was terrible. Chiriaeff would arrive at rehearsals carrying bags of necessities for her dancers. The most impetuous slop on her apartment floor among the boys - by now she had a third child and was to produce two more through a later marriage to impresario Uriei Luft. In 1968 Les Ballets Chiriaeff launched itself on Montreal stages as Les Grands Ballets Canadiens - Canada's third professional ballet company after the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the National Ballet of Canada in Toronto.

At the outset Chiriaeff's company was hardly grand in scale but her ambition was boundless. As Quebec society began to free itself from neocolonial and traditional values in what is now dubbed the quiet revolution, Chiriaeff aimed to give a revitalised French-Canada a ballet company it could recognise as its own.

The power of the Catholic church, whose priests during Chiriaeff's early days in Montreal had inveigled from the pulpit against the inherent immorality of women in tights and short tutus, began to wane. Pride in the heritage of Quebec increased. Chiriaeff took advantage of both. In the tradition of Diaghilev, she sought out poets, artists and composers to work collaboratively.

While Chiriaeff was creating or commissioning ballets based on Quebec themes for Les Grands Ballets, she was assuring its future by working tirelessly and with growing success to establish a firm base for pre-professional ballet training throughout Quebec. In retrospect perhaps her greatest accomplishment was in Anton Dolin as an artistic advisor to give her company credibility with the Anglo establishment of the Canada Council. More importantly, she luxuriated in her Montreal choreographers, Brian Macdonald and Fernand Nault. Nault provided the company with some of its most popular if not always critically esteemed works. His 1970 setting of Stravinsky's *Symphony*

of *Psalmes* was performed in one of Montreal's largest churches, finally sealing Chiriaeff's rapprochement with the Catholic hierarchy.

Nault's even more popular, showy staging of the Who's rock opera, *Tommy*, proved to be Chiriaeff's undoing. It took the company to Broadway and brought in a young audience, but exasperated the dancers and subverted Chiriaeff's artistic ideals. Worse still *Tommy* did not solve Les Grands Ballets' chronic money woes. In 1974 she passed the artistic directorship to Macleod, switching her energies to the development of the company's associated schools, from which she resigned in 1982 only because of ill health. Although she could be a tough and devious opponent, those who worked closely with Chiriaeff came to love her for her charm and generosity and to respect her immense culture, theatrical instincts, constancy of ideals and belief in the art of dance. Among many honours, she was a Companion of the Order of Canada, the highest award of artists to achieve this highest rank.

Michael Crabbe

Ludmilla Chiriaeff, ballet dancer, born January 10, 1924; died September 22, 1996

Lord Greenall

Lord of racing

EDWARD Greenall, Lord Daresbury, who has died from heart failure aged 67, was a racing motorist, powerboat driver and the brewer who introduced Vladimir vodka via a cod-Russian advertising campaign.

After Eton and the Life Guards, Greenall entered the family business in 1948. The company's main brewery was at Warrington, where in 1950 he brought a type-35B Bugatti from a local who had raced the car pre-war on Southport Sands. Since the the Bugatti's engine was irrevocably damaged, Greenall replaced it with a Ford V8 unit and went racing.

"If anyone had ever been forgiven for bastardising a Bugatti, which I doubt," wrote the club expert C.A.M. May, "it should have been Edward Greenall." His Bugatti-Ford was one of the victorious Nottingham Sports Car Club team at the inter-club hill-climb meet at Prescot in 1962.

The following year, it was replaced by a new Cooper 1100 which Greenall successfully raced against purpose-built F2 cars. He also sprouted his Cooper during the 1963 season and came third in the 1963 and 1964 hill climb championships, but in 1967 Greenall transferred his allegiance to Lotus. His best season was

1969, when he scored a hat-trick at the June Oulton Park meeting with his Lotus XV and set a new 1500cc record at Aintree in September.

In 1962 he resigned from the Greenall Whitley board, moved to Jersey, bought a brewery and developed Grunhalls lager. When Greenall Whitley's chairman died in 1969, he assumed the post until 1972. In Jersey, he took up powerboat racing,

and won the 1967 Needles Trophy and the 1968 Guards International Trophy.

Greenall became Lord Daresbury in 1990; he is succeeded by Peter, the eldest of three sons by his first marriage.

David Burgess-Wise

Edward Greenall, businessman and sportsman, born November 27, 1928; died September 9, 1996

around her ankle to which was attached a heavy ball and chain, and ran off. It had to be removed by the fire brigade, using crash-rescue equipment and cutting gear.

Word Games: When questioned by local journalists last October about France's resumption of South Pacific nuclear tests, the French Ambassador to New Zealand, Jacques Le Blanc, said a 110-kilobomb was technically not a bomb because it exploded underground and did not produce a mushroom cloud. Rather, Le Blanc said "it is a device which is exploding."

Baldy ballad

TO the tune of *Blondie's Rap*: Bishop Rodrick Wright of Argyll, and Other Highland Plagues. One day he up and disappeared; he left no sign nor traces. What's happened to the saintly barb, the mitre, crook and paces? They've gone away, slack the day, he joined the human races. CHORUS: Oh me lads, you should've seen him gannin' Every night, from ten to 3, just as he were stannin' This position, that one too, up and down the bedstead The bishop's found he loves to s... like all the human races! A honeymoon in Keswick! A week in gay Farnes Is more than most can stand me boys, 'en we were feelin' fine



Jackdaw

SYMPTOM: Feet warm and wet. FAULT: Improper bladder control. ACTION: Stand next to nearest dog, complain about its house training. Demand a new beer. SYMPTOM: Floor blurred. FAULT: You are looking through bottom of empty glass. ACTION: Get someone to buy you another beer. SYMPTOM: Beer tasteless, front of your shirt is wet. FAULT: Mouth not open, or glass applied to wrong part of face. ACTION: Go to the men's room, practise drinking in front of the mirror. SYMPTOM: Feet cold and wet. FAULT: Glass being held at incorrect angle. ACTION: Rotate glass so that men and women meet

Drinking cures from the Devils list server: B Spring

Shifty sheep

STAFF AT Bede's World, a recreation Anglo-saxon farm in Jarrow, Tyne and Wear, were astonished to find an autumn lamb had been born to one of the old ladies in their flock of primitive sheep. The nine ewes were thought to be too old for lambing - and their only companions were three castrated males. How 12-year-old Eunice, a North Ronaldshay sheep, managed to conceive a daughter was finally traced to her enjoyment of five minutes of fame. When used as an extra in *Ivanhoe*, filmed at Aydon Castle in Northumberland, she had a surreptitious liaison with another member of the cast, a Manx Loughan ram, which resulted in the unexpected arrival. More scandal in the world of films. Country Life.

Licky blighter

A South African natter called

owner's backyard by a crowned eagle which flew off towards a tree. Licky wriggled free and fell 16ft head-first into a suburban Pietermaritzburg swimming pool. Licky was caught in the net where she was treated for concussion, water in the lungs and talon punctures on the neck.

Psychedemic: A mystery ailment that caused students to hallucinate, shout, and hurt themselves affected several schools in the Ghanaian town of Tamale. The Tamale Business Secondary School was temporarily closed after 27 of its 1,000 students fell victim to the condition which "experts" say might have been caused by drugs such as marijuana and cola nuts. Jetisoned: A jet was forced to make an emergency landing after the captain feared a fish had been sucked into the engine. A startled eagle dropped the fish just after the plane took off in Alaska. All that could be found were a few scales. *Roll Tover*: A police constable



around her ankle to which was attached a heavy ball and chain, and ran off. It had to be removed by the fire brigade, using crash-rescue equipment and cutting gear. Word Games: When questioned by local journalists last October about France's resumption of South Pacific nuclear tests, the French Ambassador to New Zealand, Jacques Le Blanc, said a 110-kilobomb was technically not a bomb because it exploded underground and did not produce a mushroom cloud. Rather, Le Blanc said "it is a device which is exploding."

News of the Weird from the Fortean Times

Baldy ballad

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Large advertisement area at the bottom of the page, including a stylized signature and various text elements.

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Insurance switch in doubt

Government's action plan in turmoil as ABI's Smees resigns

Pauline Springett and Lisa Buckingham

THE Government's plans to hand over large parts of health, pensions and long-term care insurance to the private sector have been thrown into doubt following the resignation of the senior executive handling the issue for the insurance industry.

Paul Smees, the head of life business for the Association of British Insurers, has decided to leave at the end of the month, just two years after he joined the industry.

Mr Smees admitted yesterday that there had been problems drawing up a plan for action over the government's programme, but publicly denied any confrontation with the ABI's members, which include companies such as Prudential, Norwich Union and Royal Sun Alliance.

He said: "There has been no policy disagreement and no conspiracy. But there is a

problem with getting an agenda defined."

But insurance industry insiders say Mr Smees, who will join the Independent Television Commission, became increasingly frustrated at the industry's failure to agree on how pensions, health and long-term care insurance should be handled.

He is also understood to have grown impatient with the insurance companies' unwillingness to put the personal pensions mis-selling debacle behind them.

Mr Smees joined the ABI from the Stock Exchange, where he was head of public policy and international relations, and was regarded as an extremely able thinker joining an industry not noted for its intellectual calibre.

It is understood that insurance industry executives are warning the Government that extra regulation will be needed if they are to sell long-term care insurance policies. Senior figures are worried that rampant sales forces will target the old and infirm with

expensive insurance products and this could result in a catastrophe such as that involving personal pensions and equity release schemes.

One executive said that nothing short of a US-style regulatory system controlled by a body like the Securities and Exchange Commission would be sufficient to keep the industry in check.

They are also concerned that the industry has not yet addressed the issue of funding private health cover for a large proportion of the population, particularly when hospital and GP costs are rising in an unquenchable way.

Steven Bird, insurance analyst at Merrill Lynch commented: "The companies are waiting for the Government to say it will cap the losses at a certain level. On long-term care, the industry is probably not prepared to take on that risk, say, of looking after someone for 20 to 30 years after they become disabled."

Industry sources deny that there is a rift between the most powerful companies although some, such as Prudential, clearly appear to have devised a strategy to cope with changes in government policy better than others.



Paul Smees: Desires policy disagreement

Increased tax on premiums will hit exports and wipe firms out, says NCM

Pauline Springett

BRITISH exports could be badly hit and hundreds of businesses fail if insurance premium tax is increased in next month's Budget, the credit insurance group NCM warned yesterday.

The warning followed the Guardian's revelation this week that the insurance industry was bracing itself for a doubling of the tax by the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, in a move which would raise an extra £540 million for the Treasury. The 2.5 per cent insurance premium tax (IPT) was introduced in 1984.

A spokesman for NCM, the world's largest private credit insurer, said that increasing IPT was likely to make British goods less competitive overseas. He said this was despite the fact

that IPT was charged only on domestic credit insurance and not on export credit premiums.

Credit insurance covers businesses for non-payment of debts by their customers. The spokesman explained that transactions of goods between UK companies were often covered by domestic credit insurance, and the IPT usually passed on to the buyer in the form of higher prices. If those goods are subsequently sold overseas — for instance a machine part might be incorporated into a machine which is exported — they will consequently cost more than if no IPT existed.

"The final destination of goods traded between UK firms is often overseas. The knock-on effect of IPT on domestic credit insurance for such goods can thus make UK exports less competitive. NCM fully backs the Association of British Insurers' campaign not only to prevent a damaging increase in the rate of IPT, but to get the tax actually withdrawn," the NCM spokesman added.

He also warned that, if the IPT were raised, it could deter UK companies from taking out credit insurance.

NatWest rolls golden dice



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE average customer of NatWest — struggling to obtain any sense from their local branch — the deal just signed between NatWest Markets and Hambro Magan will be fairly perplexing. Here is Britain's largest domestic bank, with a huge shareholder, customer and staff base, refusing to share with anyone the cost of its big move into top-bracket investment banking. Yet this adventure has an impact on all stakeholders in NatWest.

Shareholders, who have had to live with NatWest's past mistakes in, for instance, North American retail banking, have a right to know much more about a deal where disclosure has been minimal. Customers, who have had to live through higher service charges and diminished service as the bank refocused its activities and rebuilds its finances after the setbacks of the early 1990s, need to be sure that the cash put into investment banking — at the top of the stock market on both sides of the Atlantic — is well spent and does not rebound on them in higher interest rates and charges. Other bank employees will no doubt be looking on in wonderment as an organisation seeking to cut its costs, promises to pay the 120 top corporate finance officials £2 million each over three years — an overhead hurrying towards a quarter of a billion pounds.

NatWest Markets has long cherished the ambition to move into the corporate finance world of financial markets dominated by firms such as Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan and BZW. It has looked curiously underpowered. It sought to address this issue when it bought into the entrepreneurial Wall Street firm Gieachner. With the absorption of the creative talent of Hambro Magan — which it is putting together with Gieachner — it may well feel it has engineered a better deal than if its earlier attempt to buy N M Rothschild had been successful.

Certainly, it is possible to put together an entrepreneurial house with a more traditional markets operation and create added value: that seems to have happened at SBC Warburg. Although some corporate finance clients have been lost, Warburg under SBC ownership has flourished, as has Barings under the wing of ING. Moreover, survival in the world of globalised investment banking means hanging on to the best and most loyal staff; hence the golden handcuffs.

It was inevitable, once NatWest was shot of its North American banking operation, that it would be looking for somewhere to spend the

money. Lloyds Bank chose the personal sector and NatWest investment banking. The latter is fashionable and seems a reasonable direction in which to move. However, it should be noted that NatWest's past experience with entrepreneurial merchant banking — remember the Blue Arrow affair? — ended in disaster not just for County NatWest, but for the then senior management at NatWest, bringing the current team, headed by Lord Alexander, to office. No doubt many lessons have been learnt since then. But timing is apparently not one of them.

The strong bull market, on both sides of the Atlantic, is arguably near its peak. A change of government in London could change the whole chemistry of the mergers and acquisitions market, as well as the attitude of the competition authorities which police M&A. This is not the deal made in heaven of which NatWest Markets chief Martin Owen is so proud.

Clarke's amnesia

WHATEVER his shortcomings, nobody could ever accuse Kenneth Clarke of lacking *chutzpah*. There he was, bold as brass, in Bournemouth yesterday lampooning Denis Healey for presiding over "Britain's worst post-war financial crisis" back in 1974.

The worst post-war crisis? Surely not. What about 16 September 1992, when sterling crashed out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism, despite all the Government's protestations that it would defend the rate of £2 marks come hell or high water? Was that not a financial crisis of some magnitude?

Apparently not. Black Wednesday seems to have been wiped from the Conservative Party's memory although the slightest recognition yesterday that the economic recovery gloried in by the conference had anything at all to do with the total abandonment of a policy responsible for needless unemployment, bankruptcy, repossession and hardship.

But Conservative amnesia over the ERM is but part of its neatly packaged story. Even the Government could not summon up the nerve to suggest that the recession didn't happen, but ministers have worked up a nice line in deflecting criticism. Britain, like other countries, was buffeted by an uncontrollable global downturn: now it is enjoying an upturn caused entirely by Tory policies. Simple really.

And if the recession was not the Government's fault, how could it be to blame for the tax increases that have followed? On the contrary, Mr Clarke explained, the conservative instinct was to cut taxes and reduce borrowing. Labour, on the other hand, was thirsting to spend before it had earned, to run up debts and put up taxes.

In Bournemouth, all this was done down a storm. The faithful loved it. Come next spring, the public may be less understanding.

British stores find new shores

TWO OF the biggest names on the British high street, Boots and Marks & Spencer, are expanding overseas, writes Tony May.

M & S opened a 90,000 sq ft store in Cologne yesterday — the first in Germany. The group now has 32 stores in continental Europe and will open another, in Bordeaux, France, next week.

Boots said it was spending £30 million to open eight stores in Thailand and the Netherlands in 1997, and it plans further stores in Japan.

Boots — which last tried its hand at overseas expansion in Canada in the 1980s but failed to make money — described the ventures as "a trial". It also has plans for a further 150 stores in the UK.

The company will make an announcement about the Japan operations shortly, but said its partner in Thailand would be the Minor Group.

Boots said the lack of regulation over medicine distribution in the Netherlands helped the decision to open there. Drug sales will be handled by EVA, a healthcare provider.



View of St Michael... shoppers in Cologne queue up for the opening of the first Marks & Spencer store in Germany

Leeson boss claims £1/2m from Barings

Sarah Whitebloom

BARELY healed wounds are set to be re-opened next week when a former Barings Brothers executive — a boss of the jailed rogue trader Nick Leeson — claims half a million pounds from the bank for "unpaid bonuses".

In a departure from usual Square Mile etiquette, the American banker Mary Walz is taking her case to the Stamford industrial tribunal in London's East End.

She claims that Barings, now owned by the Dutch ING group, owes her around £500,000 for work she did before the bank's collapse in February 1995.

Ms Walz and 20 other senior Barings staff left after the £300 million disintegration of the historic institution. None of them received bonuses, although many staff retained by Barings' new owners did receive productivity pay-outs. It is understood some £50 million was paid out by ING — largely to retain Barings' staff at a critical time.

Ms Walz, who was Barings' London-based global head of equity financial products, was in Leeson's direct chain of command. It is believed she had daily contact with the disgraced dealer, who was jailed for six and a half years in Singa-

British Gas apologises for threats

Chris Harris Business Correspondent

BRITISH Gas apologised yesterday for wrongly demanding payments from 400 customers in the South-west of England as it emerged that industry watchdog Clare Spottiswoode has demanded a detailed report from the company into the fiasco.

Admitting that further letters from its debt collection agency, the pre-court division of "Moorcroft Debt Recovery", could be mistakenly issued in the weeks ahead, BG promised to consider compensating the 150 customers

sent incorrect letters so far. It admitted another 250 customers had received reminder letters for bills they did not owe.

BG said it would take several weeks to resolve problems with its computerised billing system.

Although this particular hitch had been solved, there was no guarantee others would not arise.

A spokesman said: "We cannot guarantee anything, except that we are pouring all the resources that we can into resolving the network difficulties."

The problem, revealed in the Guardian yesterday, was raised at a meeting attended

by Ms Spottiswoode and Mike Alexander, managing director of British Gas Trading. Ms Spottiswoode and her officials at Ogas are understood to be concerned at BG's ability to cope with growing problems in its £150 million billing system.

The company has already issued wrong reminders and disconnection notices to thousands of customers in London and the South-east, the east of England and East Anglia, and the North.

Although the south-western problem centres on customers who have switched from BG to new gas suppliers, the company insisted that the difficulties were unconnected with

the introduction of competition in gas supply in the region.

The Gas Consumers Council said yesterday that complaints from the public about bills had soared by 107 per cent over the last six months to 12,888 cases.

The consumer watchdog said some customers in the South-west had been "so worried by the threatening tone of the letter... that they were on the point of phoning through their credit card numbers to the agency to pay bills they did not recognise".

It would bring the matter to the attention of the Trade and Industry Secretary, Ian Lang, if Ogas felt unable to act.

lion from the disidents. Yesterday's writ sought between £50 million and £60 million in total.

Several well-known Names were on the list, including Tony Goods, the former chairman of Gooda & Partners, the Lloyd's agency which advised more than 250 Names. The Goods Names suffered some of the worst losses in Lloyd's.

Another high-profile Name on yesterday's writ list was Robin Kingsley, chairman of the Lime Street Agency, which placed Names on the loss-making Feltrim and Gooda Walker syndicates.

Many of the disident Names have joined a new action group, the United Names Organisation, which has promised to provide a legal defence against Lloyd's.

Lloyd's starts court battle with Names

Pauline Springett

LLOYD'S of London yesterday fired off the first writs to Names who are still refusing to pay their losses and who have failed to sign up to the insurance market's £2.2 billion rescue deal.

Lloyd's has constantly warned it would mercilessly pursue the remaining 1,850 recalcitrant Names to pay up. The Names officially had until the end of August to sign up to the settlement package, but Lloyd's has allowed latecomers to join in.

Yesterday's batch of 125 writs is expected to be the first of several which will be lodged with the High Court over the next few weeks. A second batch may be sent to the court today.

Lloyd's is seeking £500 million from the disidents. Yesterday's writ sought between £50 million and £60 million in total.

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Busty blondes lose BT connection

Nicholas Sansonster Technology Editor

SUZIE, the busty blonde from Sweden, and Miss Mitzel, the strict mistress of Mayfair, will be sitting by the phone rather longer in future. British Telecom has decided that they have been getting too many calls from punters.

It has barred incoming calls to their phones and threatened to do the same to hundreds of other prostitutes who advertise their services on explicit cards in public phone boxes.

The telecom group revealed yesterday that it had started blocking in-

coming calls to certain numbers after warning letters sent to the subscribers were ignored.

BT announced in August that it would take action against such advertisers, particularly where the practice was most rampant — central London, Brighton and neighbouring Hove.

The first stage in its campaign was collecting the cards advertising the prostitutes' services, and then checking the numbers.

Any number found on the cards is fed into a computer and the customer is sent a letter asking them to stop advertising. If the number continues to be found, a

second letter is sent. Any further infringement leads to incoming calls to the number being blocked.

A BT spokesman said yesterday that every week its contractors were removing about 150,000 cards from central London kiosks and about 20,000 from ones in Brighton and Hove.

The contractors are accompanied by security guards to protect them from being intimidated by people who earn £10 for every 100 of the cards that they plaster the kiosks with. While BT is taking a high moral tone in its campaign against the prostitutes and their cards, it is a mundane clause in its

terms and conditions of service outlawing unauthorised advertising which gives it the power to act.

The legal action between BT and New World Payphones over the right to use the traditional red kiosks designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott has been settled out of court. BT is to keep the right to the distinctive kiosks, now mainly used in conservation or scenic areas. But, where NWP is prevented from installing its kiosks because the local authority insists on the old-style kiosks, it will be entitled to replace a modern BT box with one of its own new kiosks elsewhere.

TOURIST RATES — BANK BELLS

Australia 1,920	France 7.82	Italy 2,340	Singapore 2,150
Austria 16.35	Germany 2,325	Malta 0.540	South Africa 2.52
Belgium 47.75	Greece 34.00	Netherlands 2,085	Spain 195.30
Canada 2,060	Hong Kong 11.80	New Zealand 2.20	Sweden 10.16
Cyprus 0.795	India 55.77	Norway 9.970	Switzerland 1,850
Denmark 6.590	Ireland 5.940	Portugal 235.75	Trinidad 140,478
Finland 7.08	Israel 4.88	Saudi Arabia 5.84	USA 1.53

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

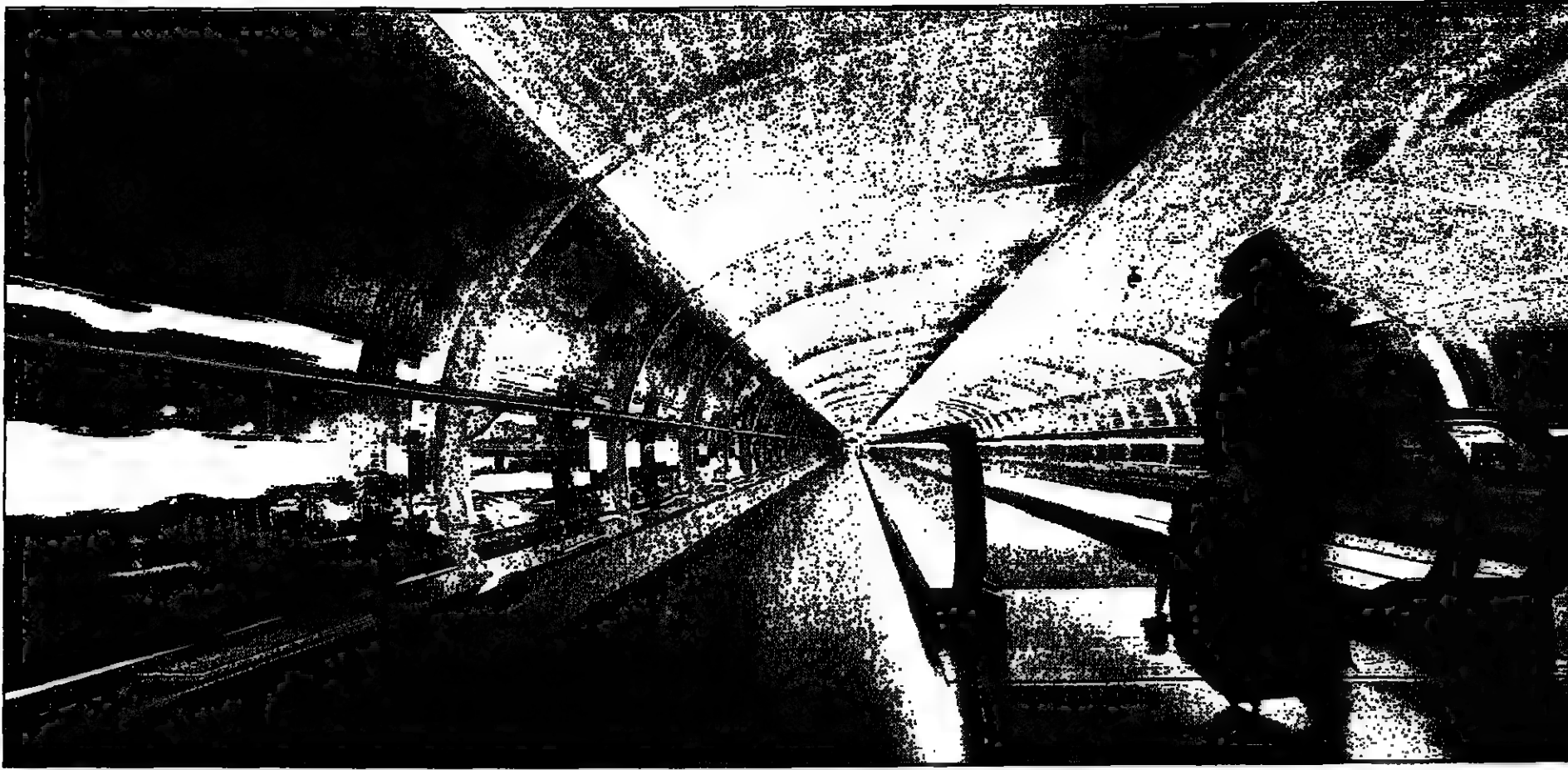
Friday October 11 1996

Death Notices

Births

Birthdays

In Memoriam



The £8.75 million Manchester airport Skylink walkway, with more steel than 14 Boeing 737s, which opened yesterday, linking with the rail station PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER THOMSON

Stores create headache for Clarke as they cash in on rising demand to increase prices

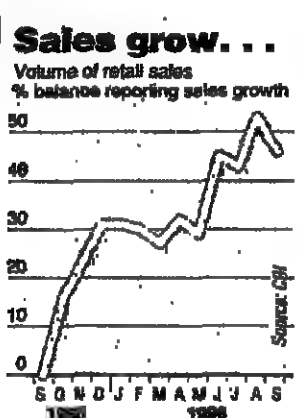
Upbeat shoppers fuel inflation

Sarah Ryle and Richard Thomas

HIGH street traders cashed in on rising consumer demand last month to increase prices, re-fuelling pressure on the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, to raise interest rates.

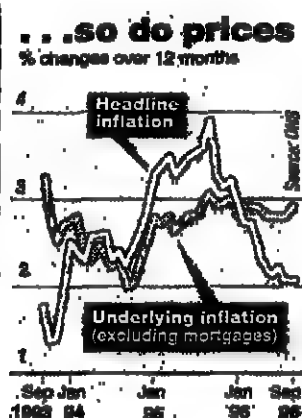
According to the latest snapshot of retail activity from the CBI, published today, sales volume grew strongly in September compared to a year ago, although expansion was not as fast as in August.

since the retail price index began in 1947. Hopes that the high street recovery will feed through to other sectors of the economy were given a fresh boost by the CBI survey, which showed retailers increasing their orders to suppliers. And the British Chambers of Commerce quarterly report, due to be published next week, is expected to show that the service sector is at its strongest this decade, with even manufacturing picking up.



Alastair Eperon, said: "The rate of growth in retail trade eased in September, disappointing companies' expectations of a further pick-up. However, the underlying growth in volumes, as measured by the three monthly

moving average, continues to hold up." Stock levels which were very high and hindered expansion are now at an all-time low, the CBI reported. Despite the latest evidence of buoyant consumer demand and the rise in the underlying rate of inflation — which strips out mortgage interest payments — Mr Clarke dampened down fears of overheating, insisting in Bournemouth yesterday that the economy remained on course to hit his 2.5 per cent underlying inflation target next year.



whose payments are updated in line with the September retail price index — will see a much lower cash increase in their weekly pensions than last year, when inflation hit 3.9 per cent. City analysts said the data

backed Mr Clarke's no-change policy on interest rates, but pointed to signs that some retailers were taking advantage of cheaper wholesale goods to widen profit margins rather than passing on lower prices from the factory gate to shoppers. The 5.2 per cent increase in August and September particularly fuelled market concerns about nascent inflationary pressure. The two pence per litre rise in fuel prices, as the war with supermarket forecourts eased, also increased concerns.

Don't forget: Sprouts, marge, bacon, imported French beer, a portable pension — and buy in a few kilowatts for the winter

Power play to sweep up sales at supermarket

Chris Barrie and Simon Barrett

NATIONAL Power and PowerGen want to link up with supermarkets to shatter the stranglehold of the regional electricity companies over domestic customers. The generators have held talks with leading chains such as Tesco, Sainsbury and Asda about offering energy packages — including gas supplies — to their customers. The moves would represent the boldest diversification by supermarkets since they plundered a quarter of the petrol market.

child, the electricity industry regulator, as a way of breaking attempts by the regional companies (Recs) to obstruct the introduction of competition in 1998. From April 1 that year 55 million domestic electricity consumers will be free to shop around for the cheapest power. One large supermarket said it was "very interested" in the energy market but concerned about its lack of experience. A senior executive said one solution was to enter the market allied with an established player. Customers could pay for their energy and groceries together at the check-out.

seeking similar deals with up to three others. The company may also develop sales directly, exploiting the brand name it has promoted through sponsorship of TV weather forecasts. The generators stand to gain by securing outlets for their power. By selling at wholesale prices to retailers, they could offset falling pool prices.

Mall owner to put pensions in your trolley

Richard Miles

BUYING a pension may soon become as easy as picking up your groceries after Liberty International, a property and financial services company, yesterday unveiled plans to sell pensions through some of the UK's biggest shopping malls. Liberty said it intends to start offering pensions early next year to the millions of shoppers who pass each day through its malls, including Lakeside Thurrock and the MetroCentre in Gateshead, pending approval from the Department of Trade and Industry.

company, said he intended to undercut the traditional pension providers by using modern technology and paying no commission to middlemen. "We need to see a paradigm shift in the UK with pensions becoming available for everybody," he said. Competition in the pensions market is likely to intensify later this year when Virgin Direct, the financial services company founded by Richard Branson, enters the arena, offering savers a range of cut-price pensions over the telephone. Liberty yesterday also announced a joint venture with Hermes, manager of the BT and Post Office pension funds, to provide fund

Choices plan under inquiry

Don Atkinson

AN "investment plan" offering subscribers returns of up to 275 per cent is in the hands of the Official Receiver after action by the Department of Trade and Industry. Principle Choices — incorporated in the Seychelles and promoted in Britain through Bournemouth-based Prime Marketing Associates — faces a High Court hearing on November 6 to shut it down "in the public interest". The organisation operated a club for members, benefits included the right to invest in a money plan offering returns of 275 to 282.50 for each £30 put in. Anyone believing they have funds at risk with Principle Choices should contact the insolvency service at 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, WCL. — Don Atkinson

One water firm offends court every fortnight

Nicholas Bamister Technology Editor

CCOURTS are finding Britain's water companies guilty of causing environmental damage every two or three weeks, the head of the Environmental Agency said yesterday. Ed Gallagher told a London conference that the water industry had lost public support after a series of public relations disasters, including big boardroom pay rises. As a result, people were less willing to help companies by conserving water. During the 1976 drought 80 per cent of people stopped watering their gardens and 70 per cent flushed their toilets less. "There are few who would believe the public would act in the same way today," he said. "An industry whose companies continually end up in court for pollution offences, that under-invests in research and development, and does not meet society's expectations for standards of service will not only alienate customers but also shareholders of the 21st century."

blamed water shortages on leakages. He pointed out that water consumption in Britain was only a third of that in France and an eighth of that in the United States. He called for an investment programme to win back public confidence and urged companies to increase research and development spending, which was far too low at 1 per cent of industry turnover. He suggested that job cuts, instead of increasing productivity, may have reduced standards to an unacceptable level. "There have been almost 250 successful prosecutions of water companies for environmental damage since privatisation," he said. "On average, a water company has been found guilty once every two or three weeks." "The company with the worst record has just received a fine and costs of over £200,000 for its 43rd offence, but most fines imposed by the courts are a fraction of this." Speaking at the same conference, water industry regulator Ian Byatt said that his role was primarily concerned with economic performance. "Regulators are given economic objectives and are judged against whether their decisions foster them. Sectoral and social considerations, on the other hand, rightly involve politicians."

News in brief

Imro review largely clears fund managers

CITY watchdog Imro is to ask a handful of fund managers to tighten up their controls over investments in unquoted stock, it said yesterday after completion of a unit trust review triggered by last month's £200 million debacle at Morgan Grenfell. Giving the vast majority of fund managers a clean bill of health, Imro stressed that none of the small number of control lapses identified by the review were serious and said it did not anticipate taking "any further investigatory action". The review, which focused on unquoted stocks held by unit trusts, concluded that improvements could be made to "various control processes" and noted that some managers placed "too great a reliance upon a single independent pricing source". Yesterday, Imro said it was writing to fund managers, "pointing out the necessity of verifying independent pricing sources to check on the accuracy of valuations relating to unquoted securities". Just 13 per cent of 1,669 authorised unit trusts — accounting for some £100 billion of investors' money — hold unquoted stock, with the average value estimated at £79 per cent of the portfolio. City rules generally bar an investment greater than 10 per cent. — Richard Miles

65,000 escape equity trap

RISING house prices have pulled 65,000 homeowners out of negative equity in the last three months, according to the Woolwich Building Society. A 0.6 per cent rise in national house prices during the third quarter helped to reduce the estimated number of households in negative equity to 475,000 — the first time the number has fallen below half a million since the middle of 1990. — Ian Whyte

Mannesmann sells TI stake

TI, the engineering group, said yesterday that Mannesmann, its German shareholder, had sold its 8.9 per cent stake in the company. Mannesmann, a shareholder in TI for more than seven years, sold at \$32 a share. Joachim Funk, Mannesmann's chief executive, said its investment in TI had been satisfactory, but his company would focus on investments in telecommunications, engineering and automotive activities. TI shares closed down 10p at 564 1/2. — Ian King

LIG pulls out of Carolina

LONDON International Group, which makes Dures condoms, announced plans yesterday to close its condom factory in South Carolina, with the loss of 200 permanent and 150 temporary jobs. LIG shares closed down 1p at 158p. — Ian King

7.30am HEATHROW Iberia: First to Madrid

We've got more time for you

7.55pm MADRID Iberia: Last back to Heathrow

020 1 20 1 20

The Guardian
Rugby League
Larder slams 'dumb football' by Lions

Card with g

ACELINE Easy D

Soccer

David Lacey says England won on Wednesday despite forgetting how to defend from the front and Gascoigne running out of steam

Hodde - more revision required

GLENN HODDE has adopted a reasoned, rational approach to the task of taking England to the 1998 World Cup...

SHEARER'S SCORE LINES

Table with columns: League, FA Cup, League Cup, Other, Total. Rows include Southampton, Blackburn, Newcastle, England U-21, England B, England senior, and Total.



riak Ferdinand's qualities in the air were apparent early on and his was the instinctive lay-off that set up Shearer's second goal...

Boring, boring Tottenham

Martin Thorpe finds White Hart Lane fans fed up with Sugar and itching for spice

NOT so long ago Tottenham were on the brink of bankruptcy. Yesterday they announced an £11.9 million profit...



Back to basics... Rival Gullit, still to appear for Chelsea this season, gets into the swing of things in a friendly against a young Nottingham Forest side at Stamford Bridge yesterday.

Fifa put McAllister on three-day standby

GARY McALLISTER'S eligibility for Scotland's next World Cup qualifying match will remain in doubt until three days before Sweden are due to play at Tirox on November 10...

Smith drops McGrath in at the deep end

PAUL McGRATH is plunged straight into the Derby County side at home to Newcastle tomorrow after being given a chance by the manager Jim Smith to revive his career at the Baseball Ground...

Rugby League

Cougars seek protection from debts of £1 m

KEIGHLEY Cougars became the second major club in a week to own up to financial problems, declaring debts of £1 million yesterday in seeking the protection of an administration order from a Leeds court...

Cycling

Boardman defies fearful descent

CHRIS BOARDMAN survived all that the lowering sky could throw at him on a course which he predicted correctly would be a 'nightmare' if it rained to take silver behind Switzerland's Alex Zülle in yesterday's world time-trial championship...

Sport in brief

- Tennis: Greg Rusedski produced the fastest serve ever recorded yesterday when he reached the quarter-finals of the Beijing Open...
Sailing: Mike Golding's Group 4 held the overall lead in 20- to 25-knot north-easterly winds at the BT Global Challenge fleet headed towards the Cape Verde Islands...
Cricket: Australia failed to take advantage of winning the toss on cracked pitch in Delhi and were bowled out 188 on the first day of the one-off Test with India...
Motor Racing: Three of the 15 events in the British Touring Car Championship will be televised live by the BBC next year...
Skiing: Great Britain has been awarded the 1998 European Cup finals for Alpine skiing at the Nevis Range and Cairngorms...
Squash: Jansher Khan of Pakistan defeated Australia's Rodney Eyles in the final...

both suit each other down to the ground. One puts efficiency of the field as his priority, and the other puts organisation on the field as his. But giving priority to those two things means you've got mediocrity, because in order to be a candidate for honours in the Premiership you need fair and for that you need to invest and it is against their natures to spend that sort of money...

Coventry's midfielder will be deemed to have served his ban. Jim Farry, the SFA chief executive, emphasised yesterday that his association will abide by the world governing body's decision. 'The settlement of other side issues arising from the situation in Tallinn will flow naturally from their conclusions,' he said, 'and that would include the McAllister situation. We will leave everything to Fifa.'

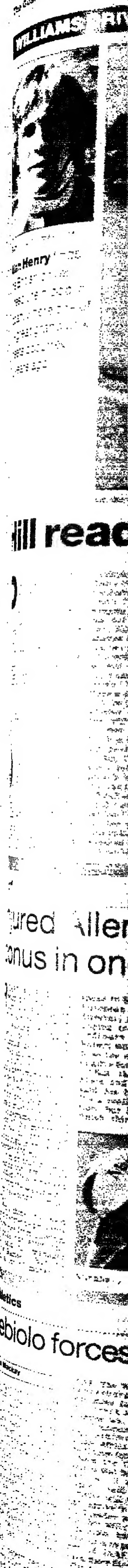
Sweden's defeat by Austria in Stockholm on Wednesday has elevated the Scots, who drew their opening match in Vienna last month and then won 2-0 in Latvia on Saturday, to marginal group favourites. 'But whether or not we are awarded the points from the Estonia affair, it will not affect the way we approach Sweden: it is a match we must win,' said Brown. The awarding of three points by Fifa would put Scotland on top of Group Four, with seven points from three games.

1996-7 Season PREMIERSHIP FOOTBALL. Tickets available for various clubs. Includes logos for Arsenal, Liverpool, Manchester United, Tottenham, etc.

Baseball, Basketball, Chess, Hockey, Cycling. Lists of events and results for various sports.

Fixtures. Lists of upcoming matches for various sports including Soccer, Squash, and Cycling.

Results. Lists of sports results including Soccer, Rugby League, Golf, Tennis, and Cycling.

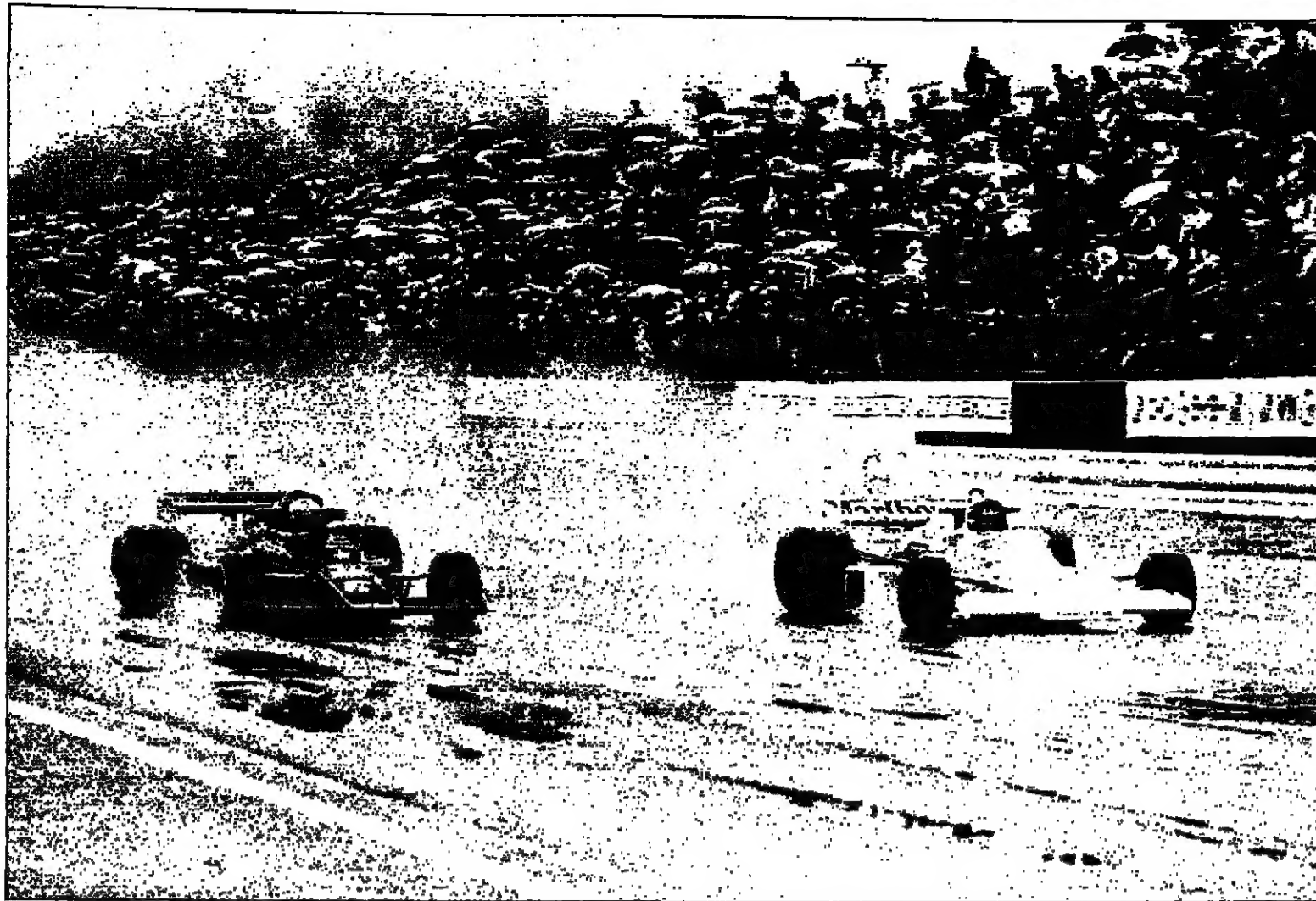


WILLIAMS DRIVER CLOSES MIND TO GHOSTS FROM PAST



Hunt... devil-may-care

Alan Henry finds the British driver in resolute mood in Japan, where one of the great grand prix upsets occurred 20 years ago



On the waterfront... the outsider James Hunt sets the pace in the final race of 1976 on the track at Mount Fuji where he won the world title by one point

Hill ready to go for broke at Suzuka

DAMON HILL approached the most important weekend of his professional life by edging his Williams Renault out on to the circuit yesterday in practice for the Japanese Grand Prix. He may have been calm on the surface but inwardly he admitted to wrestling with a dilemma over his strategy, namely how to balance a tactical approach to Sunday's race with his natural desire to win the event outright.

championship and the Canadian's own chances of adding the Formula One series to last year's IndyCar triumph are hanging by a thread. If any one but Villeneuve wins the race, Hill will step out of the shadow of his father Graham and be crowned champion. "I certainly have to take into account the fact that winning the championship is paramount," he said yesterday. "So there is a little bit of weighing up to be done in my mind as to whether I want to take more risk with a view to winning the race, or to ensure that I finish in the points in order to win the championship.

and Jackie Stewart respectively, hit trouble. Yesterday Villeneuve admitted his own hopes were "slim" but added: "I really have nothing to lose. I'll go out and give it my best shot to try and win the race and then we will see what happens." Suzuka has hosted both the best and worst races of Hill's career. Two years ago on a rain-soaked track his Williams beat Michael Schumacher's Benetton in a straight fight, ensuring that the 1994 championship went to the wire in Adelaide. Last year he ended an erratic race by embedding his Williams in a gravel trap as the German surged to victory. For the moment Hill is geared up only for Sunday. "I haven't had any sleepless nights thinking about what's at stake," he said. "I expect there will be a lot said after Sunday but I hope that most of it will just say that Damon Hill is world champion."

The day Hunt rained on the favourite's parade by pipping Lauda at the post

JACQUES Villeneuve will be keeping a weather eye on the track on Sunday as he prepares to do battle with Damon Hill, bearing in mind that 20 years ago Japan handed a rain check to another famous outsider who duly took the title on the final day of the season. James Hunt had only a slim chance of the championship when he entered the final round at Mount Fuji. He was three points behind Ferrari's Niki Lauda and the event was plunged into chaos when the drivers protested that the rain-lashed track was too dangerous, leading to a delay of 90 minutes before the start.

Hunt was in a comparable position to the one Villeneuve finds himself in this weekend. The Englishman had had to make up a 47-point deficit during the second half of 1976 and had never led the points table. Hunt went to Japan with a devil-may-care insouciance, having decided that only a miracle could win him the title. That miracle came in the form of Lauda's startling candour. The Austrian driver had battled back after receiving the last rites only three months before when his Ferrari crashed in flames on the opening lap of the German Grand Prix. At Mount Fuji, reeling under Hunt's relentless pressure in the second half of the season, his nerve cracked on the flooded surface. At the end of the opening lap he pulled quietly into the pits. Ferrari's chief engineer

suggested telling the press that it was engine trouble. "No way," said Lauda. "It's just total bloody stupidity out there. I've chosen to stop and I'll stand by that decision." Hunt led commandingly. Then, with five laps left, his McLaren came scuffing into the pits with the left front tyre deflated. Less than half a minute later Hunt rejoined in fifth place, uncertain where he was in the race order. Mario Andretti's Lotus won, ahead of Patrick Depailler's Tyrrell with Hunt not knowing where he had finished. Then he saw Teddy Mayer, the McLaren team manager, holding up three fingers. "You've done it James," he shouted. "You're third. You're world champion." Those four points were enough to gain Hunt the Formula One crown by a single point ahead of his friend Lauda.

Rugby Union Green light for tactical substitutions

Robert Armstrong

RUGBY union is to follow the example of soccer and rugby league by allowing tactical substitutions. At present only injured players can be replaced during a game but from November 4 no such reason will be necessary.

The International Board agreed to this at its meeting in Rome this week, and the changes will apply to international and senior club matches in both hemispheres.

The IB has also ruled that the number of replacements due to injury can increase from four to six. A total of five players can take the field as substitutes but only two of them may be front-row forwards. In a standard squad of 21 there must be two players on the bench who can play in the front row.

By allowing tactical substitutions an opportunity is provided to enhance team performance," said the IB chairman Vernon Pugh. "We also believe this decision makes the game more honest in that it addresses concerns about players feigning injury."

He added: "We will still have no more than six players on the bench for international matches, of whom two still must be front-row forwards. An individual who has been substituted will not be able to resume as a replacement in the event of injury except in the case of a bleeding wound."

Two complaints have been made to the International Board about British clubs refusing to release players for selection, attendance and appearance in a national representative team or national squad. "No union association, rugby body or club, whether by contract or otherwise, may inhibit, prevent or render unobtainable any player from selection, attendance and appearance in a national representative team or national squad — including training sessions — and any player must be released upon request by his union."

The IB has asked the English and Welsh unions to respond within 21 days.

"Once the unions have replied we will set a date for a hearing — assuming that a hearing is necessary — and ask what evidence and witnesses the unions wish to present," said Pugh. The IB refuses to name the clubs but it is thought that the Irish complaints refer to several English clubs and the Canadian protests to a Welsh side.

Harlequins have two Irish internationals, Jim Staples and Keith Wood, and Saracens have the Wallace brothers Richard and Paul. The Welsh club is thought to be Bridgend, who have three Canadian internationals on their books: Gareth Rowlands, Chris Michaluk and John Graf.

London Irish recently refused to release four of their international players to Irish provinces for the Heineken Cup, though the four look set to defy the club and represent their respective provinces after all. Victor Costello is named in the Leinster team against Llanelli on Saturday. Jeremy Davidson and David Humphreys are on the Ulster team sheet and Gabriel Fulcher is picked for Munster.

The relevant regulation states: "A union has first and last call upon the availability of a player for selection and appearance for a national representative team or national squad."

"No union association, rugby body or club, whether by contract or otherwise, may inhibit, prevent or render unobtainable any player from selection, attendance and appearance in a national representative team or national squad — including training sessions — and any player must be released upon request by his union."

Sale to play at Old Trafford

SALE have made a provisional 10-year agreement with Lancashire County Cricket Club that will allow the Cheshire side to stage rugby union matches at Old Trafford, writes Robert Armstrong. This season three Courage League matches — against Bath, Saracens and Northampton — will be played there and, provided no serious problems arise, the long-

term deal will take effect from next September.

Sale members have not yet been consulted about the ground-sharing proposal but it is understood that training sessions will be held and club games will continue to be played at Heywood Road as usual.

Sale own the freehold of their ground as well as a training pitch which is worth around £5 million.

Golf

Injured Allenby to claim bonus in one-putt farce

ROBERT ALLENBY is resigned to ending his fairy-tale European season on a note of absurdity by walking on to the 1st tee at the Volvo Masters, tapping the ball with his putter and walking off with up to £75,000.

Such a pantomime seems likely because the Australian, who recently fractured his breastbone in a car crash, must show at the elite Valderrama event at the end of the month to qualify for his bonus for finishing high in the European Order of Merit.

Never mind that he will be keeping out some more able-bodied if lower-ranked player from the season-ending money-spinner; rules are strict.

"I don't think it's good for golf if someone prevents someone else from playing, then pulls out after one shot," said his manager Andrew Ramsey. "But it's worth a lot of money. I

spoke to Ken Schofield [the European Tour's executive director] about it and was hoping that, in the extraordinary circumstances, Robert would be allowed to miss the event and still be eligible for the bonus pool. "But the rules are in black and white, and Ken said his hands were tied. It's a really difficult situation, but Robert wants to finish third in the Order of Merit."

Allenby has won three times in Europe this year, earning £458,908. Costantino Rocca, Lee Westwood and Andrew Coltart can all overtake him at Valderrama but, with bonus money for the top 15, Allenby would still collect £33,000 extra if he drops to fourth or £39,000 for fifth — provided he taps one ball in Spain.

and, if it means hitting just one shot — it may be with his putter as he's not fit to swing a club — that's what he'll do."

John Paramor, the Tour's director of operations, said: "We had the same thing in 1981 with Ian Woosnam. He had a chronic back problem, didn't play at Valderrama and didn't collect his bonus money."

"It's difficult to break precedents. If Robert hits one shot, then withdraws, it would be rather sad but it's just one of those things. It's happened before."

Torrance fails to make tee in his sleep

Michael Britten in Madrid

SAM TORRANCE contributed another chapter to his catalogue of golf "accidents" when he was disqualified without hitting a shot in the Old Pro-Am here at La Moraleja yesterday.

The Scot was ruled out when he failed to appear for his scheduled first round partnering Manuel Ballesteros, elder brother of the Ryder Cup captain. Instead of being on the 1st tee of the No. 1 course at 9:20am Torrance was still in bed.

Two hours earlier Torrance had answered a wake-up call from the driver of his hotel courtesy car. But, having travelled to Spain from an invitation event in Korea last week, he promptly nodded off again and slept soundly until phoned by tournament officials to tell him he had been disqualified.

"If he had arrived within five minutes of his allotted start he would merely have suffered a two-stroke penalty but, when he did not appear at all, we had no option but to rule him out completely," said the tournament director Michael Stewart.

The accident-prone Torrance, who has suffered a variety of foot injuries and sleep-walking collisions in recent years, confessed: "This time I have no excuse whatsoever. I wasn't jet-lagged. I just overslept. It has happened to me before because I am a very heavy sleeper."

The 49-year-old Scot, in every Ryder Cup since 1981, might well have struggled to match the flying start of the Spaniard Pedro Linhart (65) and the Madrid specialists Andrew Sherborne and Miguel Martin, who both had 67.

Linhart had six birdies and sank a nine-iron for an eagle two to the 5th. Sherborne, from Bristol, won the 1991 Madrid Open and the capital's 1992 Spanish Open but is not counting any Ryder Cup chickens yet. After the rival captains Tom Kite and Ballesteros had shot 71 and 72 respectively he said: "I am also thinking about the Ryder Cup next year. I think I will go down to Valderrama and watch it."

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Athletics

Nebiolo forces Games delay

Duncan Mackay

THE organisers of the 1998 Commonwealth Games have been forced to reschedule the track-and-field programme because of the hard line taken by the International Amateur Athletic Federation over the dates of the World Cup.

Primo Nebiolo, the president of the IAAF, told the World Calendar Conference in Dublin yesterday that the Commonwealth Games Federation had decided to delay the start of the Games in Kuala Lumpur by two days. In fact the IAAF had forced the CGF's hand.

Nebiolo is determined that in future no other event will be allowed to take place within three days of any meeting organised by the

IAAF. The World Cup in Johannesburg will end on September 13, the day before the track-and-field programme was due to start at the Commonwealth Games. Any athlete who missed South Africa to compete in the Games faced suspension.

Now the Commonwealth Games will begin on September 16. "I am extremely happy," said Nebiolo. "Our athletes will travel on Monday, arrive in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday and on Wednesday they will compete."

Nebiolo has taken other measures to protect the integrity of IAAF meetings. An even more far-reaching one is offering prize-money at all world championships and world cups, starting with the indoor championships in Paris next March. He is also preparing drastically to restructure the grand prix circuit in 1998. There will be 28 events next year beginning in Melbourne on February 20 and ending at Fukuoka on September 13 when almost \$4 million (\$2.6 million) in total prize-money will be awarded.

However, in 1998 there is likely to be a new Super League of 10 meetings with each event paying out up to \$1 million. "We must find new ways of packaging and presenting the circuit so as to stimulate the public, the athletes, the media and the sponsors," said Nebiolo.

Ted Turner, the founder of CNN, is planning a new Goodwill Games for winter sports. The International Olympic Committee was yesterday told that the media magnate wants to stage the event in the winter of 1999-2000.

Cricket

Motor Racing

Squash

SportsGuardian

Sugar denies gaining at Spurs' expense

Ian King

THE Tottenham chairman Alan Sugar yesterday angrily denied milking the club after announcing a controversial £7.9 million one-off write-down of player values in the accounts.

Sugar, who has seen the value of his 40 per cent stake in Spurs jump from £13 million to more than £25 million in the past year, said his main challenge was to make Tottenham "a great club again" and that he did not need to make any money from it.

As Tottenham announced full-year pre-tax profits of £11.9 million, against £5.4 million in the past year, said his main challenge was to make Tottenham "a great club again" and that he did not need to make any money from it.

Sugar attacked spiralling transfer fees and said Tottenham had to act responsibly to shareholders and supporters, even if it meant ruling out buying players the club could not afford. He was "bewildered" by Alan Shearer's record transfer to Newcastle and said Tottenham would never spend such amounts on players, since it made no financial sense, however much silverware was won.

"The fact of the matter is that, if Newcastle write down £15 million over five years, then if we believe what the papers say Shearer's wages are, it could be costing them £5.5 million a season. If you win the Champions League I'm told you'll get no more than £6 or £7 million. So, even if you win everything in sight, there's still no way you can make it pay."

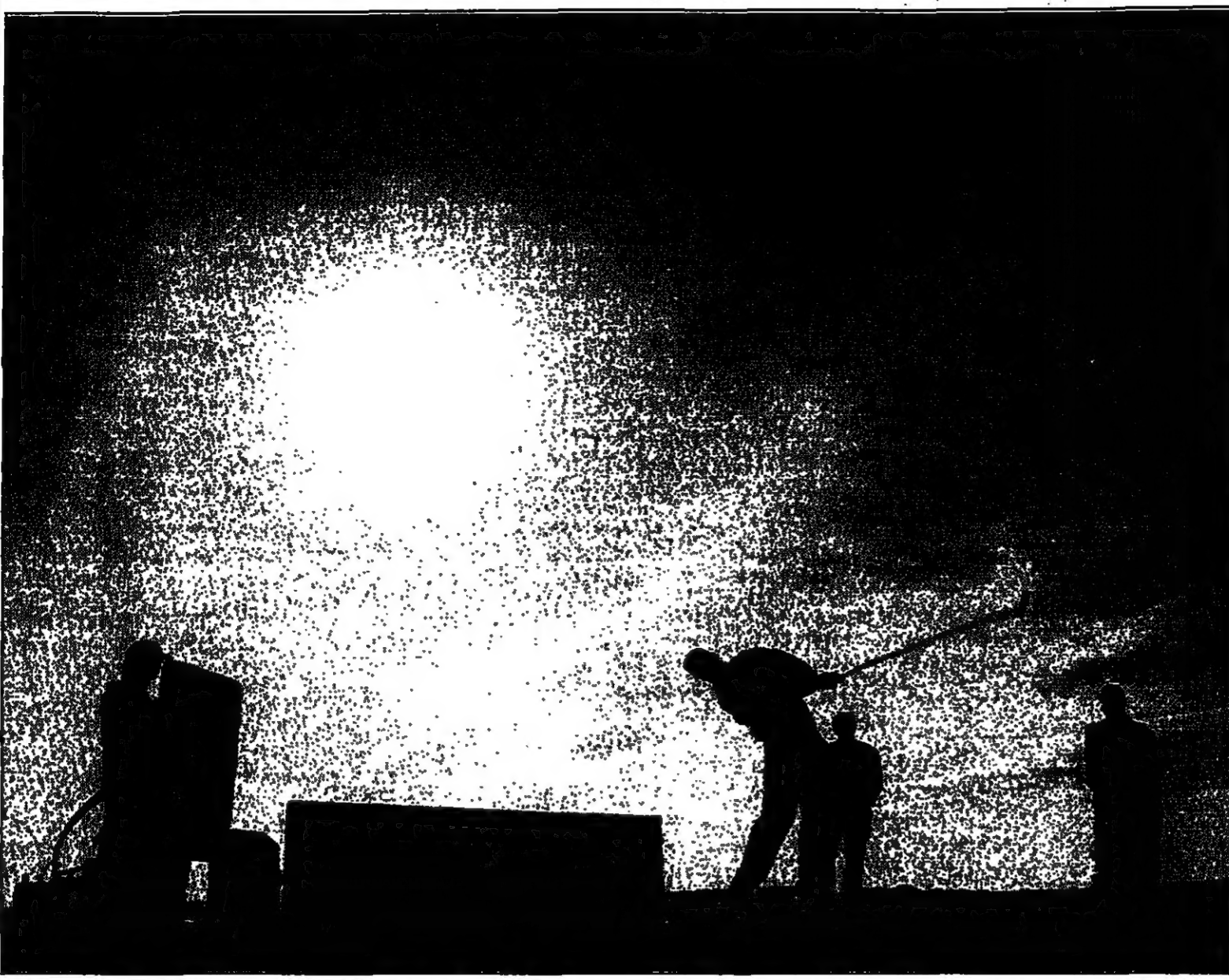
Insisting Spurs would not compete in the transfer market on the same terms as clubs such as Newcastle, Manchester United or Liverpool, Sugar accepted some fans would be unhappy about the policy but urged them to be patient. "In 1992 this club was down the Swansea to Midland Bank to the tune of £11 million. I know most fans don't give a monkey's about Tottenham's finances but they would do if they saw a big red Tesco sign on their great football ground."

He indicated that Spurs' manager Gerry Francis had money to spend on players and said there were "four or five balls in the air". But, recalling Tottenham's experience with Jürgen Klinsmann and Gica Popescu, he ruled out buying into the "new wave of out-of-control superstars who come, conquer and go". He added: "What my manager wants to buy, he can have. The outlook is quite good and we will be bitterly disappointed if we don't get into Europe next year."

Spurs shares closed 3 1/2 p lower at 436p.

Sourced by Sugar, page 14

SCOTS OUT OF LUCK ON OPENING DAY OF DUNHILL CUP



Driving ahead... but Jarmo Sandelin of Sweden, using a 54-inch driver, enjoyed a generous rub of the green in the closing stages of his deciding match against Scotland's Colin Montgomerie (below)

O'Meara has St Andrews reeling — until the 17th

David Davies at St Andrews

IN THE first round of Dunhill Cup matches Mark O'Meara had eight consecutive birdies here yesterday, a run later extended to 10 in 12 holes. The 39-year-old American was threatening almost all the scoring records in the book before the infamous Road Hole intervened.

Unfortunately for him but fortunately for golfing sanity, that 17th hole cost him a double-bogey six and he was left with a mere 63 on his card, nine under par. The course record of 62 — set by Curtis Strange at this event in 1987 — thus survived, as did any thought of a 59, which would surely count as a desecration of the blessed links.

O'Meara duly led his American team to victory over Italy, beating Costantino Rocca, who has also experienced triumph and disaster on this course. O'Meara had only 10 putts on the front nine, but his six at the 17th was a classic. His second shot

just trickled on to the road, his third failed to find the green, his fourth was five feet short and, now demoralised, he missed that as well.

In general terms the favourites all won although Scotland, the defending champions, lost. Stuck with opponents who actually turned up, they were beaten by Sweden on the last green in the last match of the day.

Such is medal-matchplay that no sooner had the last Scottish putt been left short than righteous indignation began to be heard. "We were 11 under par for the three matches," said one Scottish voice. "They were 10 under, and we lost."

Another Scot pointed out that if the five-under Andrew Coltart had been playing the four-under Patrik Sjöland, and the three-under Colin Montgomerie had been playing the two-under Peter Hedblom, the Scots would have prevailed. "Eleven under," mused Montgomerie, "would have beaten most teams."

The Swedes won this event in 1991, but it has to be said that if

one side enjoyed the run of the ball yesterday it was they, and particularly Jarmo Sandelin in his deciding match against Montgomerie.

"Oh my God, it's going to be one of those days," thought Sandelin as he watched as the Scot birdied the first three holes. It was indeed, but not the way the Swede envisaged. He was still two behind at the turn, but birdied the 11th and 12th holes and went ahead, for the first and last time, with an outrageous birdie at the 16th.

"I tried to draw my second shot, but I hit a straight fade," he explained Sandelin, who was shouting "Fore!" as soon as he hit it. "I thought it was going out of bounds." Montgomerie confessed: "I was thinking what I'm sure he was thinking: that's a six." But the wind kept the ball just in bounds, and in a place from where the Swede could putt it.

He did, of course, from what Sandelin thought was 90 metres and Montgomerie estimated to be 110 feet. The putt had 10 feet of break in it and the Swede could stand there

from now until Christmas and not hole it again. It turned that potential six into a birdie three.

"I just don't know how to describe that sort of thing," said Montgomerie, straining to be professionally polite.

At the 18th, with a 12-footer that had to go in to take the game into extra holes, he committed the ultimate sin of leaving the ball short and now Scotland's fate depends not only on them winning their remaining games 3-0, but on Sweden giving them a helping hand.

England were the only team to win 3-0 yesterday while Ireland beat Wales, despite a dangerously distracted anchor-man, Padraig Harrington. He beat an out-of-form Philip Price, who took 74, but will need to concentrate rather harder in the future.

"Every hole has a scoreboard," said Harrington, "and I was looking at all of them. I finished up trying to play match play and stroke play and also the two games in front of me. It's not a good idea."

Tories want Coe time to run and run



Vincent Hanna

BOURNEMOUTH is full of charming women of mature age and young men in blue suits. They did not want to talk about sport. "John Major knows all about sport," said Daphne, who was next to me in the queue at the security hut. "We are all behind him on sport. The BBC pretends we are split but we're not."

She seized my arm: "Do you think it's hopeless?" "Politics," I said, "is a game of two halves." George from the East Midlands became animated: "Yes, if there's a penalty about-out, John Major will take the kicks. He'll pop the ball over the bar, don't you worry." "Good point," I said. "No, three points, old boy," beamed George, and how we laughed.

I asked them if they knew the Sports Minister and they said yes they did: it was Sebastian Coe. I went to find him. Coe is not the Sports Minister; that is Iain Sproat, and I promise not to make up any more jokes about him. He has a difficult job. He has no budget and works for Virginia Bottomley. If he has a good idea, his boss pinches it. Sproat is lucky in that the Prime Minister now and then lets him pose for photographs with him.

Coe is now a whip and is supposed to come out only after dark and say nothing in public. So, out of respect for him, must I make it clear that when he speaks to me at the Highcliff Hotel I was somewhere else.

You know that story about the ravens in the Tower of London: if they ever fly away the sun will set on Margaret Thatcher. Something like that. Well, Coe is a sort of raven. He set a world record for 800 metres in Oslo in July 1979, two months after the Tories took power. He lowered it to 1min 41.73sec in 1981 and, in spite of the efforts of Messrs Craxi and Kipkester, holds it to this day. Coe became an MP in 1982 and, curiously, his original world record marks the life span of this Government.

My plan was to write about sport and the Conservative Party but all they talk about is sport in the Conservative Party. You hear the odd politi-

cal reference to final furlongs and the breakers but this year somehow their hearts were not in it.

Nor were there any fringe meetings about sport, unless you count the *Why do a million ordinary people enjoy the sport of shooting?* debate at the Troutville Hotel on Tuesday. It was a question that hung unanswerd in the Dorset air until yesterday lunchtime when Norman Lamont told us how he would win the next general election. "The tradition in our party," Coe said (sorry, did not say), "was to focus more on the arts than on sport. Permanent secretaries tended to hang around Covent Garden. Now because of John Major they know where Chelsea play." "And because of David Mellor," I said, "they know what colour their strip is."

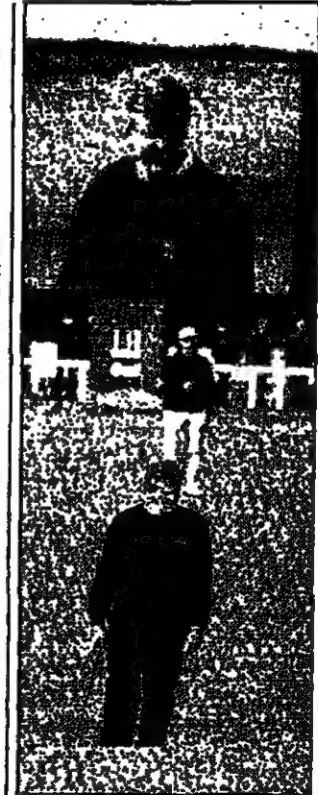
I am not sure if Virginia Bottomley knows but she could tell them where to get it washed. In her speech yesterday the saintly Heritage Secretary said she would provide subsidised trips for OAPs to heritage sites.

Then, "I want to talk about sport," she said. "All those muddy shirts and socks whirling in tens of thousands of washing machines on Saturday evenings." She blamed the "half-baked, egalitarian bigots" of Labour who had tried to drive out competitive sports. She promised to use Lottery money to fund athletes in training and pay for coaches. Then she sang a little song and banned a porn satellite channel.

I HAD a mental picture of Virginia stuffing a half-baked, stuffy Tory, in a blue shirt, into a spin-dryer when the air turned chill around me and Lord Tebbit materialised at my side. I asked him about sport and he told me a funny story about a Bosnian footballer in Manchester, but the office has heard it, so you cannot.

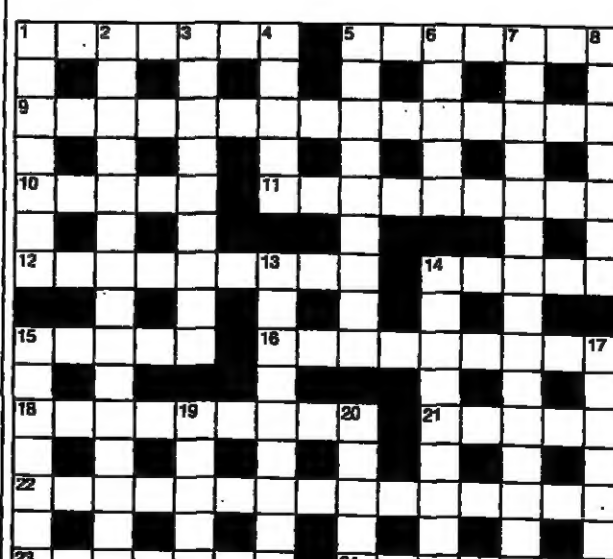
Then he said: "Try to see this Government as playing the second innings of a one-day international against Labour. Blair is 28 points ahead in the polls and there's seven months to go. The required run-rate is four points a month. And we haven't scored a run in months. And what do they do? The Government stands around waiting for Labour to bowl no-balls and wides."

Norman Tebbit smiled in my direction. An aspirant in a pot behind me was whered and fell over. A charming lady came up with a leaflet for a fringe meeting in the Solent Restaurant. *Obesity: A Plague for the 21st Century*. I ran for the train — as best I could.



Guardian Crossword No 20,781

Set by Custos

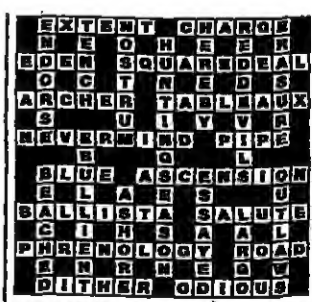


Across

- 1 Makes comfortable in col, say, and sets heartily (5,2)
- 5 Fugitive, 'arcadian', running free round about (7)
- 8 Exposes illegal practices, like a sporting arbitrator? (5,3,7)
- 10 One protected by a gun, back in a manly pine forest (5)
- 11 Drug injector found in ocean vessel (9)
- 12 It's a fag having to call round scouring grate (9)
- 14 Love to walk round the verandah (5)
- 15 Works doggedly making record in ship (5)
- 16 Fool one couple, American, being diligent (9)
- 18 Denseness revealed by a stupid grin, once about one (9)
- 21 Muslim prince to seize in endless awe? The opposite (5)

Down

- 1 Emaciated cat rolls over, about to bite nastily (7)
- 2 Last chance for bargains? Head of company, forfeiting profits, swallows beer (7-4,4)
- 3 Sauce, a Brother's stimulant derived from a tree (9)
- 4 Biblical character, one brought up to be busily active (5)
- 5 Eats among the ranks, showing boisterous nature (5)
- 6 Noisy stream causing ruffie (5)
- 7 Have a steaming bath and land in trouble (3,4,3,5)
- 8 The first person heard to fall, bringing a tear to Shakespeare (3-4)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,780

- 13 School youngster carrying nothing in a crowd of passengers? (9)
- 14 Stray aimlessly round garden, sitting a lot (9)
- 15 Kitchen utensil requiring craft with a French lady connection (7)
- 17 Cry before start of drinking, having become temperate (7)
- 19 Girl who sounds hopeful... (5)
- 20 ... She's to some extent above the law (5)

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Ruddles County Riddles.

No. 12. Change for the Better

Peter, James and John had arranged to meet up with several other key members of their local village cricket team to watch highlights from an enthusiastic amateur video of their latest, greatest mid-season match.

Like any thoughtful hosts catering for grown-up tastes they decided to get in a basic stock of flavoursome Ruddles County in convenient cans. They also agreed as friends do, to share the expense and each chipped in a tenner to the kitty. John volunteered to pay

round to the Off Licence on their behalf.

After he'd left James with a note to the Manager of the Off Licence realised he'd overcharged him by £5. To rectify the situation immediately, he gave his new assistant 5 pound coins and instructed him to run after John and return the correct change.

The assistant who was on probation (in worse senses than one) caught up with John, explained the situation but being a little economical

with the truth kept 2 pound coins for himself and returned 3 pound coins to John.

Unsuspecting John thanked him and returned £1 each to Peter and James, keeping £1 for himself. In effect this meant that the 3 friends had expended £9 each and the shifty assistant had wicked £2.

The strange thing is this £9 multiplied by 3 = £27.00 plus £2 that was misappropriated = £29.00.

What happened to the other £1?



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Saturday October 11 1996

Vomiting Government - Sir James G...

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PM delight

Major

Inside

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